

# The Ironic Gesture

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WILLIAM S. KNICKERBOCKER



January-March, 1928

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## Contributors to the January Review

Among the new contributors to THE SEWANEE REVIEW are: BYRNE MARCONNIER of St. Louis, Missouri; WILLIAM YERRINGTON, Assistant Professor of English at Syracuse University; Dr. GRACE WARREN LANDRUM of the English Department of Westhampton College, University of Richmond, Virginia; HERMANN FORD MARTIN of Lexington, Tennessee; Dr. HERBERT EDWARD MIEROW, head of the Department of Classics in Colorado College; HARRIETTE WIDMER of La Grange, Illinois; RUTH ELIZABETH CAMPBELL of Wellesley College; CHARLES FREDERICK HARROLD of Michigan State Normal College; DORTHY BETHURUM formerly of Yale University; and Dr. FRANK LUTHER MOTT, Professor of English at the University of Iowa and editor of the *Mid-West Review*.

Mrs. LILLIAN PERRINE DAVIS, formerly of Lexington, Tennessee, wrote "A Word for Tennesseans", which appeared in the July, 1926, issue of this REVIEW.

Dr. CHARLOTTE F. BABCOCK, of Simmons College, Boston, Massachusetts, has frequently appeared in these pages. Some of the poems first published in THE SEWANEE REVIEW have recently been published in *Echoes*, Four Seas Publishing Company.

Professor MABEL DAVIDSON of Randolph-Macon Women's College has published several essays on Carlyle and his Circle in THE SEWANEE REVIEW.

Dr. FRANCES THERESA RUSSELL of Stanford University, California, has recently published *One Word More on Browning*, and is the author of *Satire in the Victorian Novel*.

Dr. ALICE FREDA BRAUNLICH, Professor of Latin in Goucher College, completes in this issue the trilogy of sonnets, the first two of which were published in the July, and October, 1927, numbers of this quarterly.

Dr. PAULL F. BAUM is Professor of English in Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

Among the new reviewers are Dr. R. C. SOMMERVILLE, Professor of Philosophy at Southwestern University, Memphis, Tennessee; Dr. FREDERICK W. ROE, Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin and author of *Carlyle and Ruskin*; and Dr. ROBERT WITHINGTON, Professor of English at Amherst College, Massachusetts.

Mr. SCUDDER KLYCK of Winchester, Massachusetts, has frequently reviewed in these pages books on science and philosophy.

Dr. CHARLES L. WELLS, is Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Dean of the Theological Seminary at the University of the South.

Professor GEORGE B. MYERS is Professor of Philosophy of Religion, Ethics and Sociology at the University of the South.

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General  
Wahr.

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# THE SEWANEE REVIEW

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JANUARY, 1928

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[ No. 1

## EN VOYAGE

O magic carpet of dream,  
Where is your harbour?  
What is your port, O shimmering tapestry,  
With your warp of silver rivers,  
Of snow ridges  
And flowering fields?

I love you well—  
Your weft of bird calls,  
Of trembling lakes . . .  
And patterns of rainbow and shadow;  
Your woof of tides and sunrise,  
Of swan-roads and noontime  
And day's golden end.

I creep over you lovingly,  
My senses strung like a violin,  
Eager for the white hand of beauty  
Guiding your course.  
The slim bow of the moon passes over me—  
I am caressed,  
And lo, what harmonies . . .  
There is a singing in the quicken tree,  
And a little sound of laughter in the fernseed.  
From out the fairy round comes a challenge,  
And a promise,

While you sail on, O beautiful carpet of dream,  
Always on.

Whither do you bear me?  
I creep to your rim—  
To your border of undulating sea water . . .  
Many-coloured, like a liquid rainbow,  
With its fringe of stars and spindrift.  
I call—Yah-Oh-h-h . . . Yah-Oh-h-h . . . Yah-Oh-h-h . . .

There is no answer but the whirr of planets  
And a sound of small fish,  
Scattering the phosphorous with restless tails,  
And munching midges.

What loom gave you form,  
O magic, intoxicating tapestry . . .  
What port do you seek—  
What harbour of dream?

BYRNE MARCONNIER.

## POETRY AND FREEDOM

Definitions of Beauty are legion. Every writer on philosophy or art has attempted to put into a formula his conception of the beautiful. And no wonder: for it is one of those subjects that are challenging both for their inherent charm and for the very fact that they are so fluid they escape definition. I shall not, therefore, attempt a formula. Anyway, we are more interested in the practical problem: how to secure beauty; what are the conditions for its most complete flowering; how we can possess more of it and express it more abundantly. When I got this far in my meditation, the simplicity of the matter astonished me. Beauty is just the unhampered expression of Life; beauty is what Life does when it is free. It is harmony, perfection, completeness. Perhaps that is why it is so attractive to everybody, although we are not conscious of the reason. Life is the one thing that we love without qualification or limit; the one thing that is alluring to us on its own account. When we see life expressed with any approach to adequateness—that is, when we see beauty—we are captured. I think that is why the religions have so enlisted the love and homage of men. They have all been cults of life, rituals of life. The gods are only disguises or symbols for the one great reality—Life. And when a cult like Christianity expressly says: "I am come that ye may have life, and that more abundantly", its charm is irresistible.

Beauty, then, is synonymous with Life: beauty is just the spontaneous achievement of life unimpeded. And what is ugliness but the product of life when it is hampered? Factories are the ugliest things in our world. Factories are made by thing-minded folk—men who are enslaved by the passion for acquiring. All the prophets have told us to despise Things. We must sometimes even deny their service, that we may avoid their mastership. The only existence worthy of a man's nature is the existence wherein I create in freedom. The rose and the elm are an almost perfect embodiment of the vital principle that is working at the heart of nature. We say that children are beautiful—because in them life is not half thwarted as it is in us: they have not yet acquired those habits of body and mind which congeal and distort the divinity that

seeks to express itself in them. They have not learned to compromise with our foolish customs, nor stifle the reality within them in obedience to the prohibitions of the world. New religions are always beautiful, because they are always spiritual, that is, spontaneous; they have not yet been imprisoned in creeds and institutions. Artists are proverbially licentious: their licentiousness is but an effort toward liberty. No real art ever came from a man who was not free when he painted or wrote. The way of life is wonderful, exclaims Emerson: it is by abandonment. Abandonment to the power of life that is seeking to realize itself in us. There are some folk who will not be bound—who will be free at all cost—and they are the salt of the earth. When Jesus said, "He that will not leave father and mother for my sake is not worthy of me", he meant, you must be willing to break all bonds, or you are not a good candidate for the Kingdom of the Spirit. Our business in this world is to live at as many points as possible, to respond in all our multiplicity to the million-fingered touch of existence. What a magnificent idler Whitman was—idle toward the small affairs with which worldlings are busy, but wonderfully active toward the great affair of life. For how can a person invite his soul unless he loafs? Such men are forgotten by their own generation, but remembered by eternity. The beast is beautiful: it is spontaneous and original. But man is ugly; for he dares not be spontaneous; some *thou shalt not*, some devilish custom or mechanizing routine, is always there with its prohibition. Living by machinery is not living at all: it is only functioning: one is alive physiologically. In theory the anarchist is right. Anarchy believes so much in the spiritual, that is, the spontaneous, it repudiates all machinery. The great things have an abandon that gives them more the quality of nature than of artifice. Beauty is abandon. A thing is lovely because it has no connection with our forced, perspiring world. For the plodding methodical, it gives us a kind of soaring rapture. The charm of beauty is its uselessness. It is emancipated from the utilitarian.

Poetry may be defined as the spirit of man speaking itself out. I mean by spirit the liberated life. When the artist allows his individual spontaneity to be obstructed by any yea or nay from without, he lapses into the artisan. A poet must utter forth his own sincere vision, his personal meaning, unmodified by any pur-



pose except the desire to speak what his free heart has discovered. Tennyson would have written greater poetry if he had not been possessed by the desire to be a Christian and the desire to be a representative poet. When he abandoned himself to sheer self-expression, as in *Ulysses*, the Ages stood waiting. But *In Memoriam* is ambiguous. It is written by two persons, Tennyson the seer and Tennyson the conformist. It is part creation and part manufacture. All poets are pagans. *Paradise Lost* is a sublimely pathetic witness to this truth. Had Milton wittingly championed the cause of Satan (as he did unwittingly) the poem would be commensurate with his mighty genius. But his wings are almost always loaded with a prosaic theology; and he trails in the dust when he ought to soar. He forgets Calvinism here and there; his pagan heart bursts through into the clear ether; then he sings a hymn to light which ascends the highest heaven of song.

Poetry is the cry of the irrepressible spirit—the spirit that can not be subjugated by the tyrannies of the world, by our demand for the practical, our prejudice for action. It cares not for results; it is not governed by any Thou Shalt; you can require nothing of it. The only requirement upon it is the soul's requirement for utterance. It obeys naught save the free spirit's impulse for light and air. It springs from the immortal pulse of life.

Poetry is the voice of eternal youth. Wordsworth complained that the glory which invests our childhood will not stay, but fades into a cautious existence. One needs no Platonic dream of a celestial Exile to explain the deliciousness of childhood. Life is so blithe and auroral for the child because the world is new; his experiences are new. The Poet is the everlasting Boy. A poet is the heart of a boy in the mind of a man. He is the person upon whom custom never lies with killing weight. To him the world is always new. A poet is one whom a miracle by happening twice cannot fool into thinking it humdrum. Where others walk amid commonplaces, he goes encompassed by wonder and glory. Reading the poems of Whitman, you feel that he has just discovered the world that moment; it is fresh and strange and marvelous to him. He is infatuated with life. We all have this infatuation in certain rare moments, when the brain is extraordinarily awake. It seems to have been permanent with Shelley. Things haunted him like an insanity. About the only experience most people be-

yond adolescence feel in its intoxication, is the experience of being in love. Now that shimmer is the stuff poetry is made of—the enchantment of a world upon which we have just now for the first time opened our eyes.

Youth is not a thing of calendars. Youth is freedom. There are some folk young as a glancing moment; there are some folk older than God. Whoever has accepted the world (that is, become a resigned or willing slave to it); whoever has suffered all the picturesque frankness of his nature to be worn away by the corroding friction of our days; whoever is safe and tame and comfortable: that person, whatever his date, is old. And whenever something within you rises magnificently and revolts; whenever something indomitable cries: The world may compel me, for bread and shelter, to work in its Augean stables; but it can never compel me to accept its law of Bargain, its gods of respectability and comfort, its bedizened and authoritative humbug—no matter though your head be white, you are young, because you have allied yourself with Eternity, which is dateless. Age is comfort and staleness. Youth is hunger, peril, adventure. Hunger is the stuff poetry is made of. The only people that are interesting are hungry people. A poem is like a fountain. Fountains are the expression of the unreasonable aspiring in the pulses of earth. A poem is life's hunger in words. We are dying every day. To die is to lapse from life, which is freedom and movement. To die is to become imprisoned in routine. Most people cease to live at twenty. After that, they—digest food. The world has laid its dead hand upon them, with power. Their fire is ashes of respectability. Life is like a waterfall: it is life only while uncaptured. Bottle up Niagara, and you have casks of stale water; but where is Niagara? When our life is captured by the prudence of the world, it is no longer life, but stale endurance. The swiftness, majesty and thunder of Niagara—that is poetry. The water is prose. A boy is a person who thinks that time is not to use but to enjoy. He would never dream of doing a thing because it was profitable. Friendship to him is a spiritual passion, not a utilitarian prudence. He is as remote from our Profit-and-Loss, Buy-and-Sell existence as the glance of a swallow's wing. What a sky-creature was Shelley! Like a child-god lost from his celestial home, wandering bewildered in an alien world. How could he

live after the law of this uningenuous earth; how could he help bruising upon our flinty customs his empyrean flesh? He is such a child he loves an image for its own sake, like a prism with its unpractical gamut of color. He could not understand our utilitarian use of metaphor. Coming from a sphere where beauty is religion and religion is life, what had he to do with a world of huckstering and scramble? A world where religion itself is a petty cosmical politics? There is no youth today. We graduate from babies into adults, disillusioned and sophisticated. Youth is charming because it believes in ideals—that is, in freedom of life. It believes in the shining sublimity of Niagara. When you are disillusioned—when life is falsified—you see Niagara as so many cubic feet of water. A poet is he who recaptures the intoxicating strangeness of a new experience in language that has all the shimmer of the original glancing moment.

There are some things that never grow old. Light and flame, the waters of ocean, truth, a noble idea, the spirit of things, life, God—these are timeless, these are young everlastingly. Age cannot wither them, nor custom stale. Religion does not gather years, but the body of religion. Only the outside of anything ages: the inside is beyond time. The real news of the world is dateless; it was here from the beginning and never stales. Poetry is the *Eternal News*.

Just as our physical perceptions stale by repetition, and miracles lose the sting of wonder; so with proud ideas in the mind. We go yawning through marvelous picture galleries. We have all the great truths; but they are dead within us. By the waters of life, sings Emerson, we are miserably dying. There are great truths all about us; we touch them wherever we go. We are starving for noble ideas: noble ideas environ us; but we know them not. They are only phrases. They ought to startle us like a new sun in heaven, or like the ecstasy of woman's flesh; but they never disturb the ghastly smoothness of our mediocrity. We know the body of Truth; not the soul. We live petty lives because we harbor petty ideas. If those passionate truths that have made poets and martyrs were real to us, we should be touching sublimity this day. Now again the Poet is the discoverer. Thoughts that in us are ashes—to him they are flame. The idea of God is like an army with trumpets. The thought of man is an intoxication.

For the poet bequeaths, not an idea, but an experience; not a philosophy, but a passion; not a fact, but the shimmer of a fact; not a truth, but the leap of his pulse at the touch of Truth. Is didactic verse bad, is *The Psalm of Life* inferior, because it expresses a philosophy? No: it is inferior because it came out of Longfellow's invention. There was not enough ecstasy there to make his gospel sing. It is the *body* without the soul of poetry. If a great idea does not make you incandescent, then it is not your idea. Concerning his thought of the Eternal, Emerson cried, "It has watered my pillow at night". The religion of Adonais (can you doubt?) was to Shelley nectar and ambrosia. That is the stuff poetry is made of.

Poetry liberates. We are so tightened up all over we never act freely, but labor and sweat. Life seldom flows through us naturally; it struggles against prohibitions. A little less perspiration; a little more inspiration. Poetry gives release; it gives abandon; for the moment, our crippling self-consciousness falls away, and we enjoy the freedom of gods. Then we express, not the will of that which denies, but the will of that which affirms, the will of life. Life works in us as it works in a superb tree or splendid animal. We ought to pray for these Dionysian moments that are the almost constant mood of poets like Shelley and Whitman and Nietzsche—the celestial frenzy of the Bacchinal. That, I think, is why men love wine; it is a substitute for the pentecost; it offers an easy escape from the prohibitions that ordinarily crowd thick about us, like flowing garments about a runner, hindering the swiftness of his body. It liberates us into a world where free vistas open up, and nothing impedes the spirit's play. Thoreau got this intoxication from the morning. Emerson said a poet was a man who could be tipsy with water. Give us enthusiasm in the old Greek meaning; give us the Eucharist of the poets; let us eat and drink divinity. Then perhaps our cloddishness will take wings and our dead hearts awake.

Poetry is the beauty of words. Beauty is what Life does when it is free.

WILLIAM YERINGTON.

Syracuse University.



## THE IRONIC GESTURE

### A BRIEF STUDY OF THE WORK OF HERMANN FORD MARTIN

*He was an incandescent one,  
A tinker of tunes,  
Fed on the fire of the sun,  
And a drinker of moons.*

From the romance of life fate sometimes pricks out a curious pattern, twisted and snarled, good laced with evil, gold on ebony, gargoyle in grandeur, old work-knotted hands palpitant down the years in marble tracery, moonlight flowing mellowly through prison bars, humans caught in the queer long sweep of uncharted tides. So, careless Jove has set in the arabesque of a tawdry West Tennessee village one of that race of young, ironic singers whose disconcerting lyres in these late years have drawn from the nebulous road inordinately bold iconoclasm for those smug persuasions with which we delighted to adorn our past.

It is a bare place, this village, drab, clay-girt, not even gray with the saving grace of age, but stark, unlovely, banked untidily about a brick and solemnly crenellated court-house; its streets meandering into mud; its people literal, shuffling sons of sloth—undoubtedly the last place one would look for a poet. Still it is just here that for the present Hermann Ford Martin has his home, and it is here that corporeal life has been given to those lyrics in which he has set before the world that most simple and yet most complex of all things, the soul of a troubadour; lyrics often harsh in concept, bitter with ironic delusion (that first step in the long journey toward complete disillusion) but which never fail to keep their minstrel's tryst with beauty, nor to cover with a jester's mantle those scars which are common to all who know the curse the star-dust brings.

Strange, far seas are in his song, the tragic urge of the creative instinct, the eternal call of that necessity which he has so beautifully phrased in "Post-Mortem"<sup>1</sup>:

What rebel star's ungovernable beauty  
Drenched him with such irreverent radiance,

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<sup>1</sup> Post-Mortem, *Contemporary Verse*.

And tore him from his bread-and-butter duty  
To play buffoon, and sing, and weep, and dance?

Some wisdom lit his white fey-haunted features  
With wonder that had taunted stagnant eyes,  
And sent his fellows, toil-entangled creatures,  
Mumbling from his enchanting ssophistries.

\* \* \* \* \*

There came no bitter, no appalling answer,  
No bones were found to offer worms a boon;  
And it is whispered darkly that a dancer  
In wild revolt now revels with the moon.

In "O Traveler"<sup>2</sup>, a different aspect of the subject appears:

O Traveler, what trenchant wonder  
Enchained your stormy eyes,  
Tell me what stark exultant thunder  
Tamed your brave blasphemies?

Was it the old intolerant ocean  
Inflamed with drunken foam,  
Or some wild bird gone mad with motion  
Stabbing the world's blue dome?

Perhaps upon a purple-misted  
Island where houris whirl  
Your brazen heart was trapped and twisted  
By some bronze-bodied girl.

Or maybe on a night of magic,  
To a barbaric tune,  
You fell a victim to the tragic  
Enticements of the moon.

O Traveler, once you ran wildly  
A riotous universe . . . .  
What wisdom made you walk so mildly,  
And crowned you with a curse?

In lighter vein is "Jongleur":

Beauty I've followed  
Under lone skies,  
Strumming its wonders  
And sorceries.

\* \* \* \* \*

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<sup>2</sup> O Traveler, *The Buccaneer*.

Strapped on my ornate  
Donkey a chest  
Bulges with trinkets  
Won on my quest —

Fire-pointed petals,  
Moon-shining sails,  
The tears of a queen,  
And peacock tails.

When I am dead, thrust  
Sternly from pleasure,  
Lean, lying fingers will  
Search for my treasure;

Break the gemmed lock  
Of the filigreed chest,  
Oh, and curse long  
At the guerdons of quest;

And cry as they crumple  
A scarlet leaf:  
'This man was a fool  
Instead of a thief'.

In the sestet from the sonnet to Campaspe, bright and beautiful, it is Pierrot's self who treads the perfumed, secret way of night and love:

Oh, I am still the same, poet, buffoon,  
A half-mad minstrel in a tinselled town,  
Who once in secret kissed your scarlet gown  
Then ran and sobbed beneath a painted moon.  
Have you not heard my singing agony  
Shattering the plinths of time, O Campaspe?

The haunting melody of "Sea Foam"<sup>3</sup> with its acrid beginning:

My mother's breast was salt with tears  
My father's blood held bitter brine,

is dark with fatality, an apocrypha of disaster, which is yet as rhythmical as the sea out of which it springs:

Ah, little lad, your face is fair  
And in your eyes the dreams be there,

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<sup>3</sup> Sea-Foam, *The Minaret*.

God pity you for you must go  
 Whichever way the winds blow,  
 Aye, you will hear the sea call,  
 And the wind call, and the stars,  
 And love will never hold you long,  
 But it will leave its scars.

\* \* \* \* \*

You'll not think then of Madge or May  
 Nor tarry for a kiss,  
 You'll pack your canvas kit and go,  
 For you were born for this.

For there is none could hold you  
 And none whom you would hold  
 When the storm comes tearing through your soul  
 And turns your fancy cold.

And in "April Fires"\* we find not only a gripping tale of the shadow which forever lurks in the propensity of woman to rise and follow when the minstrel calls, but an epitome of the philosophy of all troubadours:

We, whom the flame illumines  
 Are marked for sacrament,  
 No woman's arms can cage us,  
 Nay, nor a continent.

Our sires were roving minstrels  
 In olden times  
 Sprinkling court and countryside  
 With their tingling rhymes.

And for some penance we must go  
 Winning only loss,  
 But from our ranks a Dante,  
 A Christ upon the cross.

Always beyond each border  
 A hidden wonder waits,  
 We are the spenders of beauty,  
 Immortal profligates.

Women are but taverns  
 To quench a moment's thirst,  
 Then drunk again with stars and tunes  
 We go our way accurst.

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\* April Fires, *Contemporary Verse*. (Original title, "Flame".)

## II

It is needless to say that Mr. Martin draws his inspiration from some source other than his present environment. It is with the exotic loveliness of the Pacific Islands that many of his verses are tinted; Melanesia, Tahiti, Fiji, Hawaii, and all the gracious spaces which lie between, down to his birthplace at Oamaru, New Zealand, where lands of wondrous beauty rise mountain-high from iridescent and enchanted seas. His first artistic expression was in his teens when he was a contributing illustrator to that unique periodical of the Antipodes, the "Sidney Bulletin"; and it was in the South Seas, too, studying in private schools and under special tutors, that he was thoroughly grounded in a knowledge of the English poets, from Chaucer down through the grand, star-bordered centuries.

He has lived in Lexington ten years or so, bearing his share in the teapot tempests, following the routine of an exacting profession, and all the while writing so quietly that few of his neighbors are aware of his literary gifts. In his life, as in his song, he is always the minstrel, undefeated—undefeatable—a feather in his cap, irrepressible buskins twinkling, be their footing icy heath or palace marble. Does it rain, his lute tunes easier. Does the wind blow, he wraps him in a purple cloak. He not only lives in a village, he adapts himself to its mode, concealing his high treason of art the more easily because he so little resembles any traditional aspect of a poet. He wears no whiskers. He indulges no moods. And his ties are so far from being picturesquely irregular that it is impossible to recall the pattern of even one. Sometimes his eyes are blue, not the abiding blue of the sky but a suffusing brightness of mood, like the transitory sunshine of April days. Small, lithe, simultaneous in thought and action, he is vastly alive; talkative upon any subject under heaven—save poetry, or himself; never critical of people, yet scornful without mercy for many things; what good he does, his left hand knoweth not—and 'twould be a brave friend indeed who would undertake to inform him. For under all, his basic structure is not steel, but raw iron. Beneath his tinselled coat, *he knows*. Back of his ironic gesture, stands the unconscious heroism of the compromise with life which



he has penned in "Apocalypse"—a compromise, it may be added, which every artist at some time must inevitably make:

Soon this wild heart shall bring its own reward,  
 A bitter quenching of the immortal flame.  
 The finite anger and the rebel sword  
 A wreath of wisdom shall avenge and tame.  
 This savage heart that pillaged from the stars  
 Shall beat its blackened wings against the soil  
 Where men have built themselves flambuoyant bars  
 To hide an aimless and an endless toil.

Then I shall look on men with even eyes,  
 Warring with them for food against the mud;  
 And turn my face from the derisive skies  
 Besprinkled with the sun's insurgent blood;  
 And go my way down the endarkened years,  
 The flame drowned out with comprehending tears.

### III

How far Mr. Martin's writings—or any man's for that matter—may justify a claim to be regarded as poetry is wholly a question of definition. Carlyle grants that we are all more or less poets insofar as we are able to approximate a reading of poetry. At the same time he sets forth very precisely a norm for the poet soul, who being fundamentally one with the prophets, "is a man sent here to make it more impressively known to us,—that sacred mystery which he more than others lives ever present with." Again, more specifically of prophet and poet: "The one, the revealer of what we are to do, the other of what we are to love." And drawing the lines yet closer, we come to that distinction between what is true speech not poetical and true poetry, in terms of music, with the definition at last: "Poetry we will call musical thought. The poet is he who thinks in this manner. At bottom it turns still on power of intellect; it is man's sincerity and depth of vision that makes him a poet. See deep enough and you see musically, the heart of nature being everywhere music, if you can only reach it." To this it is necessary to add but a thought advanced by Mr. Allen Tate in his discussion of "Poetry and the Absolute" in the January-March 1927 SEWANEE REVIEW: "The inferior poem need not be written, because the inferior poet only states the problem without solving it, and this the reader is capable of doing for himself."

As to music, Mr. Martin's rhythmic, full-pulsing verses certainly carry their own assurance of poetic value. Undoubtedly, he thinks in music. How far then has he penetrated the mystery? How far revealed what we are to love? How far led us out on the firm-packed sand?

His writings, published chiefly in *Contemporary Verse*, *The Fugitive*, *The Lyric*, *The Buccaneer*, and others of the poetry magazines and in Braithwaith's *Anthology* in which he has been represented in recent years by "April Fires", "Hunger", "Home", and "O Traveler", fall naturally into three groups. The first would include the troubadour pieces from several of which quotations have already been given. In his songs of the sea he is as happily successful in adding to that store of comprehension which is a component part of love. Sometimes it is an appallingly desolate ocean he pictures, as in "Sea-Bondage":

He had knelt before them in the sensate night  
With bent eyes, and young despairing hands  
Pleading toward the devouring light  
Of their invulnerable faces.

Lands

Lifted their lonely trees like icy fingers  
Above him menacingly pointing to where  
One disembodied star forever lingers  
Beckoning with an aloof dispassionate stare

More often it is a sea of marvellous beauties, one potent to bring forth the closing lines of "Home"<sup>5</sup>:

And came into his mind the day  
He had left ship and sea and tide  
That he might not be long away  
From his slim-bodied bride.

Then musing still, with wistful eyes,  
Alone, he stepped into the night,  
And there beneath those starless skies  
Met the consuming light . . . .

He did not know that he was dead,  
But somehow felt that he was free,  
And from the road that homeward led,  
He turned towards the sea.

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<sup>5</sup> Home, *The Fugitive*.

The third group, that designated by the author as "The Crimson Cord", comprises compositions whose mood is perhaps best expressed in a portion of "Fragment":

O Indomitable Thou, weave one whorl  
Of scarlet through our pale improbable lives.

The poems range, however, from that point—which is possibly the last the author himself would select for a nucleus—up and down, through and over and beyond many things. The scarlet whorls are plentifully apparent and the improbabilities are anything but pale. Still their essence is of that quality which belongs to a baffled soul seeking still for light through a world in which he can find none. Sin is rife among them, reckless mockery of the stars, terrigenous passages of garish lights and leery threnody, others of voluptuous beauty, of compelling music, and the heart-breaking beat of defeated hands against implacable walls. Yet they are not good poetry,—using Mr. Tate's distinction. They reach no conclusion. They solve no problem. They simply stir the reader to a blindness of protest and lead him nowhere. They are cast in molds not of musical thought, but of musical passion.

"Labour" from the sonnet sequence "Valse Rouge" will serve to show the style of the more harsh and jangling ones:

New in the night, with their befuddled hands,  
Red as the wrath which spills them to despair,  
These toilers of miraculous demands  
Have carved a god incongruously bare,  
Bedecked with grapevines only, and one bud  
Withers within his cold disordered mouth  
Dyed purple-deep with their innocuous blood  
Who seek a civil winter in the South.

Nay, not so close my dear, your breasts have fangs,  
And it is early. Shall we order wine?  
(Lean on his hackneyed cross the limp god hangs  
To jazz concocted by Sol Rubenstein.  
The music fumes, limbs crack, and eyelids leer . . . )  
Dear shall we dance, or shall we order beer?

In the other two sonnets of this group it is religion and love that make their dance of death. But the mood is not for long. A score or less of such travesties, and safe again in the wild, free

winds, we find the strangely beautiful figure which emerges from the organ tones of "When Peace Comes":

The coming of this one, this gentle one,  
With the broken eyes, and the starry mane,  
And the gaunt face (keen as blinding sun)  
Washed white with secrets, aye, and wet with pain,  
The coming of this one from the suave nowhere,  
With all knowledge wrapped in a sheaf of rain,  
And beribboned with the intimate rare  
Beauty of moon-drenched gardens, will again

Let us look upon life graciously, hold  
In our amorous hands the simple loves  
We sanely garnered. Oh, we must place gold  
Before him, and a feast of purple doves,  
And slender virgins with bejewelled limbs  
Must dance to him the old voluptuous hymns.

Is it mockery to picture Peace in such a guise? Does this, too, hold but the bitterness of old promises believed only to find them leading to fresh crucifixion? We choose to think not. Peace won through storm would be such an one. There is conclusion here. There is conclusion also in the "Apocalypse" quoted above. Conclusion abides in "Home". Conclusion most positively reaches one through "Hunger"<sup>6</sup>:

I have known hunger,  
But not for bread;  
And He knew hunger too,  
But He is dead.

Hunger for beauty,  
Love . . . O lonely One,  
For your heart-breaking hunger—  
Stone.

Thirsty, I drank  
Tears from a broken jar;  
He on the bloody cross  
Gall and vinegar.

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<sup>6</sup> *Hunger, The Minaret.*

Hunger and thirst,  
Impassioned pride,  
He understood . . .  
But He is crucified.

The desolation shadowed in "Valse Rouge" is here complete. And yet the one but stirs to a new madness of desire: the other incomprehensibly satisfies. It opens the door beyond. Without, there is nothing—stone, and one dead; within, all is still—finished. But it is not death. It is knowledge. This is the stillness which belongs to the true cynic, that one who, as expressed by G. K. Chesterson in his life of Browning, has arrived at "that state of mind in which we hold that life is mean and arid; that no soul contains genuine goodness, and no state of mind genuine reliability".

A poet needs to be a cynic. Indeed he must be one, for it is in the paradoxical nature of poetry to demand at once the highest passion and a state of spiritual sophistication wholly dispassionate. Let a man feel a thing deeply and he grows incoherent. Let him apprehend that it is to be felt—that it would be a genuine fact if there were any facts—and then he is ready to write of passion, patriotism, beauty, or whatever engages his interest. His images then become, not realities, but symbols—puppets ready to his bidding; parables for the unfolding of what might otherwise be too intimate for revealment. Believing men pigmies, he may draw them giants,—as he most surely will draw them as less than pigmies if by any change he does believe in their towering proportions. He must conceive them as smaller than himself, if he is to get where he can see them. Just as one finds being in love more interesting after he has arrived at that stage of growth in which he may experience enchantment at the same time he analyzes its processes; so the poet must be to that which he writes omniscient, living both within and without it. But if he lose his belief in good, he must lose also his belief in evil. His very life depends upon his power of detachment, both from the world and from himself. For him, too, Gethsemane, Golgatha.

Mr. Martin is on the way to becoming a true cynic. His ironic gesture is but a stage of growth, out of which he is even now emerging into the sincerity and depth of vision of Carlyle's demand for the complex ways of human living, as he already lives



ever present with the sacred mystery of his sea and the all-enveloping power of the beauty which breathes in the high blasphemies of "Nocturne":

The night insidiously was stagnant.  
The moon, a virginal wan goddess danced tip-toe,  
(Beyond the benumbed lips and dumb enduring eyes  
Of her bewildered worshippers) listening  
Through vague interminable time for that sheer  
Agony of song that would omnisciently proclaim  
The coming of her mortal lover.  
The perfume of protuberant blossoms  
Balanced delicately pirouetting around  
The tinselled dwellings of the humble, leaving  
Tremulous remembrances in the simple bosoms  
To whom this was a terror of desire  
Un-numbered, and un-named, and all-consuming.

\* \* \* \* \*

I could believe on such a night of such  
Secretive loveliness that there might be  
Beyond the enamoured vision of these eyes  
A stark, indomitable one, all-wise,  
Who, hoarding beauty hungrily, tumbles  
Inconsequential trinkets lavishly  
Upon his painted earth-toy—star-colored crumbs  
Swept from his august table to prepare  
For some ineffably high orgy.

In his spiritual evaluations he is the upstanding Nordic, pagan, mystic, his own priest, his own confessor, his own Book. He claims to have become a materialist and to be now seeking the substance rather than the unsufficing shadow. It is rather that he is of those in whose mental processes the material is all but non-existent. He has no geography, no flora, no flutterings of patriotism, no hearthstone even. The tragic loneliness which ever lies at the root of the troubadour's being sets him apart from other men. His seas are those which no one ever saw, his winds none else can hear. Yet inexplicably they draw one ever nearer to the portals of understanding. He evinces no deep concern for social problems. Other men's sins simply fail to interest him. And never at any point does he assume any brotherhood with the prophets. What he sets forth as meet for our loving he does by the simple process of singing what to his own mind is beautiful.

And if sometimes, he would people his temples with deities inconceivably empty, he stands but as one who is in harmony with his age. The whole thing is but a gesture, as wise people know. They may deny till cock-crow and beyond, these musical young worldlings, but they have walked the paths of Galilee. Mr. Martin himself may be but a tinker of tunes, one led of the moon, troubadour, buffoon, but the melody which flows from his every line was one made for violins. He has stood—somewhere—in the Vastness. Whatever the way that opens before his feet, he can but follow where it leads. He has made his choice. He has taken upon him the burden of beauty. He has written the words:

This way thou goest, being anointed,  
A cross to lure thee, and a flame for goad.<sup>7</sup>

LILLIAN PERRINE DAVIS.

Lexington, Tennessee.

### TO EMILY DICKINSON

You are the snow-wreath by the old gray wall,  
Unyielding still to kiss of April sun;  
A scentless windflower breaking through the dun  
Oak leaves that, crisping, linger like a pall.  
You are the wood-thrush notes that rise and fall  
Far on the horizon when the one,  
Insistent note of mourning dove is done  
And melts into the sunset. You are all  
My mind can picture of a saint at prayer  
Who, as the light on missal page burns low,  
Lifts to her Lord rapt face and swelling heart.  
To-day I found you in the blue May air,  
Where blackberry blossoms, dew-wet, frail as snow,  
Hid rusted thorns that tore old scars apart.

GRACE WARREN LANDRUM.

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<sup>7</sup> *The Anointed, The Fugitive.*

## POEMS

By HERMANN FORD MARTIN

### I

#### DANCING GIRL

The dark man  
With the pale despairing hands leaning  
In the doorway of the gaunt shanty  
Slides wrinkled blue shutters  
Over the triumphant anguish  
In his icy eyes.

There was a far night  
When the suave hills expectantly blended  
Into a saffron curtain covering  
The green sea of the grass—  
And your young lover lay dreaming vainly  
Of luminous maidens wanly gleaming  
Down roseate centuries of romance,  
Of Iphigenia, Iseult, of Hermione . . .

O Dancer, suddenly you were a moon-petal  
Pirouetting tremulously  
In the arms of the earth-drunk wind!  
An incandescent moth fluttering insanely  
To the consuming temple of the fire-god!  
A winged sword flashing blindly in the amorous  
Black hand of a gargantuan warrior!

By this bright blade  
Your grave young lover died.

Now the dark man  
With the pale despairing hands leaning  
In the doorway of the gaunt shanty  
Tumultuously remembers (being dead)

That in her hair the four winds roamed,  
 Strange oceans tumbled in her eyes,  
 On her bosom twin moons swam,  
 And her juvescent limbs were runways  
 Shining to secret and exultant gardens.

## II

## DIRGE FOR A DANCER DROWNED

There was no movement brazenly to still  
 The amazing single shadow that had stolen  
 Straight from the moon-lost morass to the kill  
 The river had released purple and swollen.  
 How changed intolerably the fine far face  
 (My lips went white remembering red kisses);  
 And that bleak body in the cream one's place  
 Where had been all incomparable blisses.

Fitfully the music moans and is ended.  
 The curtain drops on the distorted dust.  
 The shining limbs into the blue are blended  
 With all their feverish loveliness and lust;  
 And I must go cursed with the benison  
 Of seeking beauty in oblivion.

## III

## CAMPASPE

I was that minstrel, poor, and prodigal,  
 The toy of Alexander till you came  
 Sprinkling the twilight with a splash of flame  
 While music hung like perfume in the hall.  
 Poor butterfly . . . beating against the wall  
 You fluttered blindly when he bade you dance . . .  
 Did you not hear, Campaspe, hear me call  
 To that sweet hurt and hunger in your glance?

Oh, I am still the same, poet, buffoon,  
A half-mad minstrel in a tinselled town,  
Who once in secret kissed your scarlet gown,  
Then ran and sobbed beneath a painted moon.  
Have you not heard my singing agony  
Shattering the plinths of time, O Campaspe?

IV

EARTH-SECRET

Which way I came  
Does not matter—  
Out of the flame  
Where stars shatter ;

Out of the earth  
Where worms gnaw,  
And death and birth  
Close the same door.

Which road I take  
None need care . . .  
Grasses will shake  
Their tawny hair,

Winds moan,  
And skies weep,  
And all unknown  
This secret keep,

(When I am dead  
And under cover) :  
To the earth fled  
Her fiercest lover.



## A MODERN EURIPIDES

It is most illuminating to observe that Bernard Shaw's play, *Saint Joan*, bears striking kinship to the spirit and art of Euripides. And it is interesting to see that Shaw is criticized for the same things for which Euripides is criticized. Ancient Greek tragedy generally has been blamed for certain conventions, such as the *deus ex machina* and the use of a messenger to report action which occurs off stage. Euripides has been further criticized for using a brief prologue to acquaint us suddenly with the whole past history of the characters and the state of affairs preceding the opening of the tragedy. And his artistry has been questioned for his introduction of long rhetorical arguments into the fabric of his plays.

*Saint Joan* may be said to contain all of these devices except the Euripidean use of the prologue, though it, too, has a measure of importance for our present discussion. Let us consider them as we meet them in the play. The fourth scene of *Saint Joan* is amazing. Two characters, or three, sit on the stage and discuss at some length feudalism and the church, and the rise of nationalism and protestantism—and the interest for the spectator is absorbing. Objection has been made to this scene as well as to the epilogue, but as Mr. Shaw himself says of his critics: "I think they are mistaken." It is just this scene which makes one understand what the play is about and why Joan went to her martyrdom. From the particular case of Joan we are led out to gaze upon a vista of the times in which she lived and to comprehend the forces that were moulding the history of these times. This is true realism, realism in the Greek sense, for it points to the universal realities which alone can be of importance for universal humanity. Of course Joan is a real character vividly presented, but by her side or rather in her we look deeper and see nationalism and protestantism combating feudalism and the power of the church to dictate to the individual consciences of men. If this scene were excised the soul of the play would be gone. It is fascinating not merely because it presents the historical forces at work in the days of Saint Joan, but also because there are here presented to us unanswerable questions as deep as humanity itself.

Shaw does not settle questions for us, but rather raises them. That is why we are vaguely disturbed after witnessing a Shavian play; that is why some do not enjoy it.

It is the same reason that made a part of the Athenian audience hate Euripides. Thus in the *Bacchanals* we have a conflict between mysticism and reason, between the God Bacchus and Pentheus, the practical mortal, who rejects the orgiastic rites of Bacchus as vicious. Euripides' plays are full of characters pleading contradictory causes. In the *Suppliants* there is an argument between Theseus and a Theban herald on the relative merits of monarchy and democracy. The Argive chieftains fighting against Thebes have been slain. The Thebans have refused to allow the Argives to bury their bodies. So Adrastus, king of Argos, and the Suppliant women (from whom the play receives its name) appeal to Theseus, the leader of the Athenian state, for help. A Theban herald, sent by King Creon, comes to bid Theseus refrain from assisting the Suppliants, and there then ensues the argument on monarchy and democracy. Perhaps it has nothing to do with the action of the play, but it raises the question as to whether justice exists in greater degree under the rule of the one or of the many. It is the idea behind the situation. And we, like the Greeks, are not averse to hearing the argument as well as seeing the struggle between particular opposing forces. In fact it is rather unlikely that the idea would have occurred to all of us without the poet's guiding influence. In the case of Shaw's play how many of us would have seen in *Saint Joan* the beginnings of the protestant reformation or of the national spirit, were it not for the fourth scene?

Again, reported action lies under a stigma. But why? The messengers' speeches usually constitute the most thrilling part of the Greek play. A good actor not only recites the words, but makes us live them in his acting. For example, the account given in Sophocles' *Electra* of the fictitious death of Orestes in the chariot race at Delphi is marvelously dramatic and affecting. But it should be seen, not read. The burning of *Saint Joan* takes place off stage. We do not see it. We see the effect it had on the chaplain, on Ladvenu, and on the executioner. The imagination is better than the sight and the effect more dramatic than the action could possibly have been.

In his introduction to the edition of the play Shaw speaks of the *deus ex machina* as a mechanical device and therefore interesting only as mechanism. This is strange because he has used the equivalent of a *deus ex machina* in this very play—the epilogue! It is in a sense mechanical. It takes us forward a period of twenty-five years; it brings the dead together with the sleeping and the living—but it is far more interesting than mere mechanism. It serves exactly the same purpose that the *deus ex machina* did in antiquity. Euripides liked to concentrate his action into a small portion of time. To do this he used the prologue to acquaint the audience quickly with the past. The *deus ex machina*, in similar fashion, he used to cut off the action after the most dramatic moment was passed, and to acquaint us with the future. It is merely childish to say he used it artificially to untangle a complicated situation. There is but one play, the *Orestes*, where this claim might reasonably be made. Let us take an example of the usual usage. The *Iphigenia Among the Taurians* ends with the flight of Iphigenia and her brother from the Tauric land. They have befooled the king and escaped, that is to say, they are on ship and leaving the land. Obviously there is no need for the intervention of a god. But now a great wave is made to drive the ship back to land in order that the goddess Athena may appear ostensibly to save them, but actually to inform us regarding the future. The drama is over, but the audience is glad to hear of subsequent events in the lives of the characters. This is precisely the function of the epilogue in *Saint Joan*. It is a look forward.

In a word, the whole effect of the play is no doubt very like the effect of a play of Euripides on an Athenian audience. It is not final, it is not conclusive—it is life. It troubles us and makes us think. We dislike thinking perhaps, and so some would blame the dramatist for the inconvenience thus thrust upon them. Goethe in his diary, speaking of Euripides, says: "Have all the nations since his time had one dramatist worthy to be his valet?" Perhaps Shaw is the answer to that question.

HERBERT EDWARD MIEROW.

Colorado College.

## EXILES BOTH

It is a beautiful book outwardly, with its rich cream-colored parchment cover, the illuminated letters in black and crimson, and on the frontispiece, the medallion of Dante—and a Florentine fleur-de-lis in flaming scarlet! Beautiful, too, are the thoughts within for the scholar—tributes in sonnet form—that passed between the great poet and his friends, and finally the appreciations of later Italian poets—all a memorial volume to the poet who died some six hundred years ago! But to me the book is most dear for the circumstances under which it came into my hands.

I have only to turn its pages—it is not even necessary for me to summon up my faltering Italian—to recall (here in a chill northern land) that day in Florence. It was a typical Florentine day of mid-July,—with its dry, clear air, but blazing noon-day sun. For it was an hour when all sensible Italians were taking their siestas, cats dozing on the cool portions of stone steps, on the shady side of the streets, men sprawled, like cats, on whatever cool spaces they might find. Only the unintimidated tourist like myself, with all Florence to see and a bare week in which to see it, was rash enough to adventure out at this blazing hour!

With carefully conned map, I studied a labyrinth of streets, in and out narrow ways, where the blue sky shone through a narrow slit overhead, in search of the "Casa Dante". How one could picture the poet—as a mere lad at school walking dreamily, half-unseeing through these little streets. At last, after various missteps, I found it and knocked hesitatingly at the door. For it is only with humility of spirit that one visits a great soul like Dante!

But my welcome was cordial—almost immediately a little gray, bent old man opened the door, and in answer to my broken Italian, ushered me graciously into the house, speaking in that impeccable English which is such a humiliation to the tourist groping in a strange tongue. Seeing my enthusiasm, he showed me the house bit by bit, carefully explaining which part was actually standing in the poet's day, pointing out the house which once belonged to Gemma Donati, and then the windows where he would have seen Beatrice in her robe of goodly red. Here were the rooms where

he ate and slept and dreamed—rooms now devoted to an industrial school for boys. (How much, one wonders, does the spirit of Dante brood over them? If only it might be young poets or artists gathered here! And yet, who knows—William Morris was poet and artist and printer as well; perhaps the poet's spirit will give to their fingers a new skill and that love of beauty which sheds its breath over nearly everything made in Italy—more especially made in Florence).

As my fancy was thus a-wool-gathering, I found that I had been only half listening to the quiet voice of my guide. Then at some tone or accent, I came to myself and my surroundings, and realized that here was no mechanical cicerone, but a human being with trials and sadness of his own.

I had been thinking of the tragedy of Dante,—of what exile must have meant from this so beloved city. And then my guide asked me where my home was.

Ah, I came from America! And then with tears in his eyes, he poured out his tale of years of homesickness. But, did he not love Italy? I asked in amazement. Italy was well enough, but America was the chosen land. All the days now he longed to return. For he, too, had lived in America for many years in comfort and prosperity; he had been a bookbinder for a great firm in New York; then in some political uprising in Italy he lost all his money, and here he had remained ever since. He had two sons in the Bronx, he told me with pride, but they were married now, had their own families, they needed him no more.

Strange ironies of life—Dante homesick for Florence—the old caretaker yearning for the Bronx, and the grandchildren who did not know, the sons who had almost forgotten, to whom he was now but a name! Was it perhaps this strange tie after all that gave him a peculiar kinship to the great hungry-hearted poet? I wondered as I found my way out, the precious volume under my arm, passing through the winding street where the pussies were still sleeping in the shade, and the narrow slit of sky still cut through the rows of stone houses.

"Never will I return", wrote Dante, scorning to return with cringing apologies and recantations on his proud curling lips. Never *can* I return says the guardian of his shrine, for he, too, has found how salt is the exile's bread!



I turn back to the volume which I had bought, partly that I might have ever with me a tangible proof that I had walked as a faithful pilgrim over the very stones touched by the footprints of the poet, partly for the sake of the little bent, old man, for the exile whose name is unknown, who will never be celebrated six hundred years later as was the poet in the words of d'Annunzio:

By the oak and the laurel and the gleaming sword—  
By the victory and the glory and the joy and by your sacred hopes,  
Oh you who hear and see and know, high guardian of the fates,  
Oh Dante, we wait upon you.

And yet he, too, in his humble way, though an exile, is still waiting upon the shrine of Dante "the prophet in exile".

CHARLOTTE F. BABCOCK.

**MANY RACES HAVE I RUN**

Many races have I run  
With fate, and fate has always won.

Often less than by the inch  
Of an intuition's flinch;

Often less than by the flash  
Signalling that faith will crash.

Often less than can be reckoned  
By what  
Is vaguely an inert spot  
Within a second.

But most  
I've lost  
By the same mischance,—  
One back glance.

MELVILLE CANE.

## TIME AND LITTLE CHARLOTTE

A university professor once said in the course of a lecture on nineteenth century literature that Thomas Carlyle had taught us to think history in terms of Time. This statement, like most arresting ones, is true only if duly qualified, but we do feel in reading *The French Revolution, Past and Present*, and other Carlylean masterpieces, Carlyle's conception of the Fixed Purpose that persists through the steady passage of days. And this Carlylean conception of Time is one that we need to hold to here in our new, hurried and harried country, where Time seems a swift destructive force, snatching away all we love and have grown used to; where we tear down before age has had time to mellow, and where Tomorrow seems much more important than Yesterday. One of the greatest boons that travel in an old country can give us is, I believe, the feeling that nothing Good is ever destroyed by Time, but is held in its flux, in the "endless and beginningless that surrounds it". This brooding sense of the ultimate purpose working through Time, Carlyle the Mystic always felt.

Something of this feeling I got recently as I wandered through England and saw for the first time massive grey cathedrals, old, old houses, the quiet of English lanes, and the beauty of old market crosses. I got it on Salisbury Plain from the age-old ruin of Stonehenge, and again from the grey spires of Oxford. But suddenly one day, the Carlylean conception of Time came to me in even greater intensity and in a most peculiar, small, and every day sort of experience. I met an old friend! I was spending the morning at the Carlyle House in Chelsea, the famous No. 24 Cheyne Row, when suddenly I came upon a small glass case of trinkets bearing a card which informed the public that they were

*Personal Relics of Carlyle and Mrs. Carlyle  
which had belonged to their servant "Little Charlotte",  
who afterward became Mrs. Southam.  
Presented by her sons.*

I was excited and pleased, for Little Charlotte has been a time-and-space-separated friend of mine since I first met her in her

mistress's delightful letters. I fell in love with her at first reading, and have searched eagerly for news of her through all the published letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle. But in 1861 she drops out of the letters, and I had no idea what became of her. I had worried about her, too, for such unpleasant things did happen to most of Mrs. Carlyle's long line of serving maids, and I could not bear to fear that some sordid or tragic fate had overtaken the dancing steps of Little Charlotte. And here she was again all safe and sound!

For the benefit of those who, through some unhappy chance or strange perversity, have been denied, or have denied themselves the pleasure of reading the Jane Welsh Carlyle letters, let me introduce Little Charlotte. She came in 1858, taken on trial from nearby in Chelsea. Almost at once she ingratiated herself into the affections of her master, her mistress, and all of their host of callers, and her doings and sayings make merry and homey a long series of letters from Mrs. Carlyle, who tells how Charlotte wrote a curious, ill-spelled letter of appreciation to her master; how she crocheted a large cover for the dining room sofa "out of her own head", and adopted a black kitten. The kitten episode is too good to leave unquoted.

I find all extremely right here. A perfectly cleaned house, and a little maid radiant with "virtue its own reward", and oh, unexpected joy! a jet-black kitten added to the household! Playing with the dog as lovingly as your cat with your dog! This acquisition of Charlotte's announced itself to me by leaping on my back between my shoulders.—She (Charlotte) is quite a jewel of a servant. Far more like an adopted child than a London maid of all work.

In its periods of calm the Carlyle household must have been a delightful establishment. And Carlyle was right when he wrote Mill once: "If I had shown you my book presses here, my refectories, dormitories, even stall and coal-houses, my whole terrestrial clay environment, you would have seen me infinitely better and loved me more".

The next year Charlotte went to Scotland with the Carlyles, (also the horse, Fritz, and Nero, the dog. We regret that there is no further record of the black kitten.) and had a thrilling time. Mrs. Carlyle wrote to a Cheyne Row visitor who particularly liked the little maid:

Charlotte is the happiest of girls! not that she seems to have much sensibility for the "Beauties of Nature" nor that her health was susceptible of improvement, but that the "kindness of Scotch people" fills her with wonder and delight. "Young men who don't so much as know her name, passing her on the road, say to her 'Bonnie wee lassie'"—Did I ever hear of such kind people?

For another year there are pleasant references through the letters to Charlotte, and all seems well; then in September of 1860 we learn with a shock that she has been discharged. Why, we do not know. There are two new servants installed and Little Charlotte is banished. Mrs. Carlyle writes:

She has been much about me, and I don't know what I should have done without her,—but I am glad at the same time that I had fortitude to resist her tears, and requests, to be taken back as cook. I told her some day I might take her back: but she had much to learn and to unlearn first. Still it is gratifying to feel that one's kindness to the girl has not been all lost on her, for she really loves both of us passionately—only that passionate loves not applied to practical uses, are for so little in this matter of fact world.

That was in September; in December we find Little Charlotte re-established in greater felicity than ever at Cheyne Row. Mrs. Carlyle recounts the reunion with her rare descriptive gift:

I have had a great fret taken off me in the removal of that vulgar conceited woman and the restoration of little Charlotte. Upon my word I haven't been as near what they call "Happy" for many a day as in the first flush of little Charlotte. She looked so bustling with ecstasy as she ran up and down the house, taking possession, as it were,—and she showed in the visitors (not her business, but she would open the door to them all the first time, and receive their congratulations), and it was impossible not to share in her delighted excitement! and all of them said they were glad to see her back! I had trusted that in time she would humanize the other girl,—But it needed no time at all. Sarah was humanized and the two sworn friends in the first half hour,—

It is now three weeks since the new order of things; mistress and maid have subsided out of the emotional state into the normal one, but are still very glad over one another; and if the work of the house does not get done with as much order and method as under the tall Charlotte it is done with more thoroughness, and infinitely more heartiness and pleasantness; and the "bread-puddings" are first rate. Sarah's tidyness and method are just what were wanted to correct little Char-

lotte's tendency to muddle; while little Charlotte's willingness and affectionateness warm up Sarah's drier and more selfish nature. It is a curious establishment, with something of the sound and character of a nursery. Charlotte, not nineteen till next March, and Sarah seventeen last week. And they keep up an incessant chirping and chattering and laughing, and as both have remarkably sweet voices, it is pleasant to hear.—As neither can awake of themselves I don't know what I should have done about that hadn't Charlotte's friends come to the rescue. An old man who lodges with Charlotte's mother—raps on the kitchen window until he wakens them, every morning at six, on his way to work; and Charlotte's father—, raps on the window again before seven, to make sure the first summons has been attended to! to say nothing of an alarm, which runs down at six, at their bed-head, and never is heard by either of these fortunate girls! So I dare say we shall get on as well as possible in a world where perfection is not to be looked for—

But the idyllic arrangement did not last, although we do not know how or why it ended. In April of 1861 we find Little Charlotte gone. There is only one more reference to her. In 1863 Mrs. Carlyle writes:

You remember my little Charlotte? I had a visit from her yesterday; and she looks much more sedate than when I had to put her away. She is "third house maid" at the Marquis of Camden's, and lives in the country, which is good for her.

And that was my last news of Little Charlotte until I came upon the case of trinkets in the Carlyle House in Cheyne Row. There was a "lady's pocket companion", given her by her mistress, a lock of her mistress' hair, a brooch with a miniature of "Nero", the little dog so dearly loved by Mrs. Carlyle, and other little mementoes of a personal and sentimental kind. And an intelligent and kindly care-taker at the House gave me pleasant items about the after years of this little girl who had always found life thrilling. After she became Mrs. Southam (Mrs. Carlyle was then dead) Charlotte always brought her babies to show to her old master, and one, a bald-headed baby, so disturbed the old sage that he gave her a guinea, with instructions to buy it a hood and keep its head well wrapped up. I was told, also, that these babies, now elderly men, come often to see the place where their mother lived and served. One had been there, she said, only the week before.

And suddenly I got an impression of Time as a medium for



preserving the Good, merely dusting away, as it were, the evil and superficial. And isn't that the Time Gospel that Carlyle preached in his *French Revolution* and elsewhere? Oh no, Carlyle was not the first to present this conception, but he emphasized it for us, and helped us to grasp at the bigness of the idea. And here was Little Charlotte helping, too.

And Time goes on and on, and one age views the work of an age before and pronounces it good or bad, and the good somehow perseveres in stone, in print, in personality. And we feel that somehow Carlyle, the Mystic, still broods on the Mystery of Life, but not with such tragic, remorseful eyes as once he did; and Mrs. Carlyle's bright laugh rings down the years, freed of the sharp note that came into it from the hopeless beating of her keen, practical mind against the Mystery that she could neither solve nor accept; and Little Charlotte's winsome personality, which she could never have perpetuated in words of her own (being but an ignorant cockney maid of all work) sparkles through the mirthful letters of her mistress, and helps those of us who look at the world with more jaded sight to see it anew with "fresh awakened eyes". And her sons come back to see the home where she served and which her childish brightness of soul made less sad—

And Time goes on—and on—and on.

MABEL DAVIDSON.

Lynchburg, Virginia.

## VICTORY

Long 'bout a week ago  
 Ole Nawth win an de rain dey fit;  
 Des beated de trees an slamed de do,  
 Den—atter a while dey slump away  
 Leavin de worl lak a woman dats wept.  
 But de rain, he beat, cos jes 'fo day  
 I heerd pass, mighty brazen lak,  
 Sashayin his sef thu de valley agin,  
 A tellin de worl, dat spring's come back.

HARRIETTE WIDMER.

## A MAN, A TREE

You will find the doctrine both in Plato and in Aristotle (though I have lost, for the moment, the exact references), that is, both in poetry and in science and philosophy. It is also, probably, in Shakespeare and in Bacon. I mean, of course, the resemblance, the analogy, of *man* and *tree*.

Certain points are obvious and superficial. Both have trunks—but so have elephants. (Don't be merely facetious, says Conscience.) Both have limbs. (I dislike the word, says Conscience, because of its Victorian associations.) Both have coverings of skin or bark in layers, varying in color, roughness, and so forth. Both have hearts within—though there are exceptions, to be sure; sometimes firm, sometimes soft; "heart of oak" is especially familiar. Both have hair. (English trees do not, says Conscience, unless you are thinking of Milton's "curl the grove with ringlets quaint".) Thanks for the reminiscence. I had Greek and Latin trees in mind, however,—*comae*. The Virgilian passage will occur to everyone at once. And I will add, under favor, that certain species of both are deciduous. (Bravo! says Conscience.)

"The thought that man is like a tree", says My Author, "arose in the Doctor's mind when he first saw the representation of the veins and arteries in the old translation of Ambrose Paré's works." This clue I should pursue further, only that I dread meeting with any more of the cousins of those disembowelled men of the Almanacks or those mere-muscular figures of the anatomists. Except under the most esthetic circumstances, the bare human form is a little shocking to behold. But strip off the last veil, flay a man, . . . no, it is intolerable.

On one point, nevertheless, I find the learned in perplexing disagreement: the relation of head to root. Misled perchance by Virgil, we have carelessly thought of man and tree as standing in the same relative position as to zenith and nadir; that is, the roots are equivalent to man's feet, trunk to trunk, branches to head and arms and hair. Doubtless the poets are all on this side. Carew, for example, calls his Lady's foot

the precious root  
On which the goodly cedar grows.

(The cedar's trunk is not of the shapeliest; but probably no malice was intended—Fie!, says Conscience,—and did not Solomon liken the neck of one of his Ladies to a tower,—a tower of ivory?) But the poets are rarely realists. They betray their divine origin by looking on the bright side of things. They make man out a little better than he is. Poets are generally optimists, philosophers generally pessimists. (This is a bit doubtful, says Conscience.) Well, say meliorists and pejorists. At any rate, the poet's position on the head and root question has for a necessary corollary a belief that man is an upright animal. And this simply cannot be proved.

Hear, moreover, the philosophers. "Thus," says Aristotle, "the leaf is the protection of the pericarp and the pericarp of the fruit; while the roots are analogous to the mouth in animals." Next, Rabelais: trees, he says, "ont la teste, c'est le tronc, en bas." This combining of the head and trunk is a little hard, even unnecessary; and besides, it recalls those people whom M. Polo discovered, whose heads were in their chests; and recalls also a certain horrible dream of Shelley's. But the rest is clear. "Les cheveux, ce sont les racines, en terre; et les pieds, ce sont les rameaux, contremont; comme si un homme faisoit le chesne fourchu." This attitude, I say, is clear. It robs man of some of his dignity; but man is himself ever doing that. It seems to hold up to Nature not a mirror but a lens . . . the scientific spirit! Yet it has perhaps the dignity and accuracy of truth. Life is one great Inversion. And we do not even recognize our pitiful predicament. Nor is this simply a witty paradox: as the inimitable Beerbohm pictures Mr. Chesterton, seeing life from a fresh angle; viewing the world head nethermost. The artist, I know, intensifies color, enriches nature, by looking between his legs; but he keeps his feet on the ground, as is most fitting for the most imitative of the arts. The philosopher, however, being serious and no juggler of persons, sees things as they are,—in their actual, dreadful inversion. The President of the Society for the Abolition of Vice has his name on every other page of Madame Hauteville's diary; Miss Bridget is the mother of Tom Jones; Oedipus metes out justice—to himself; Francis Bacon dreams and builds for the glory of God and the relief of man's estate, yet grovels in mire; Milton sets out to justify God and ends by justifying Satan; Napoleon stalks

across all Europe, and dies on a little island . . . And he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

Yet stay.

*"Unde credis hominem inversam aborem appellari?"* asks Antonio Perez. *"Inversam nostris oculis humanis et terrenis; rectam vero vere viridemque, si radicem defixam habuerit in suo naturali loco, coelo, unde orta."*

Is this a trope, or a solution? It is but the sealed eye of science that calls "inversion" that which is inherently right. Man's head is in the earth. All that he thinks, excogitates, reasons upon, is right earth. But his roots are in the heavens, whence cometh all his help. His dreams, his visions, his raptures, all the food for his soul—from the stars, the wide pure air, the sunlight. His thoughts, the fruit of his own efforts, his plans, his works when he labors for and by himself—earth indeed; and not all ugly either; for is not earth beautiful in spring, and in summer, and in autumn, and in winter, too?

*Que scai-je?* Inversion is all illusion, perhaps, after all. Or perhaps the initial doctrine was wrong. Chapman's

Man is a tree that hath no top in cares,  
No roots in comforts,

but begs the question. Shall we not, then, light a taper for St. Michael, another for the dragon, and another for ourselves,—and so to bed?

PAULL F. BAUM.

## MISS MITFORD, THE IDYLLIC

I wonder if it is possible to turn from *Main Street* to *Our Village*? That would be to turn from dust to dew. The vogue of realism which gazes upon the counters of the town and the people behind them, only to find them sordid, is out of touch with the idyllic mood of Miss Mitford's sketches. Elmer Gantry could never have dwelt in a Miss Mitford environment. With Miss Mitford, *If Winter Comes* would inevitably have been transformed into the Spring not far behind. And what matter either the "slice of life" or the "current of life" in a remote spot?

*Our Village* is a veritable *Midsummer Night's Dream* of provincialism in which Miss Mitford is Puck, Oberon, Titania, and attendants all in one. No mortal on earth, always with the exception of Miss Mitford, ever saw a village so charming in the sunshine and shadow; no other ever knew weather to lend itself so magically to the caprices of mortals, picnics and gala days not excluded. The blessings of heaven descend upon the just and the unjust alike, because after all the just deserve them, and the unjust are on the point of mending their ways. The earth brings forth her increase under propitious quantities of sunshine and rain; floods subside at the proper and crucial moment for the harvesting of hay. Even sorrow weighs lightly upon these people, gently merry and light of heart, to whom no emotion is very large or overpowering, whether of love or grief. They inhabit a world of compensation, in which the recompense is accepted as a child receives a kiss in plenteous consolation for a bump. The quality of mercy is not strained. There lies softly over the sketches the enchantment of pure delight, and pure impossibility. If leaves come out too early they escape the frost; if a dell, cool, full of flowers and a running brook is discovered, it remains a place of quiet, not overrun by a rabble horde seeking to lay claim to the peaceful spot; if lovers are parted, even by Farmer Brown, they work towards each other from the opposite ends of a furrow—and Farmer Brown knows that they will. A delicate afternoon mist of lavender light colors all reality for Miss Mitford while she writes; yet it casts its spell not only upon her but upon all who know the children-people of *Our Village*.



And consequently Miss Mitford's very real people are blessed with the sweetness of an idyllic heart which removes them by its loving kindness and light unconcern, from jealousies, heartburnings, and unhappiness. They dwell in a purity of simplicity unknown to the outside world which does not visit *Our Village*, and incomprehensible even then to those who do not share its charity. Hearts are not bruised in *Our Village*, for no one desires to damage them. The widowed landlord keeps the maiden lady and the widowed matron upon the tenter hooks of his affection at opposite ends of the hamlet, yet when he finally brings home as his wife the pretty child of seventeen, there is no great grief, because he has never encouraged either of the other contestants unduly. Lucy's twenty lovers do not repine when she at length bestows herself upon a prim school-teacher and eschews the joys of homeliness for the delights of learning. At least they do not feel more sorrow over their lost hopes than she over leaving her mistress or her mistress over the departure of her maid. Lucy's evenness and tranquility of affection waver at the prospect of a separation from her long time friends. Is not her hesitation at marriage solely for this reason, idyllic? And although Miss Mitford does not say as much, it is not improbable that Lucy receives her fairest gifts from her old and undecided suitors. In *Our Village* the freshness of affections never changes, even as it is never clouded for long. A bright but shallow stream clears quickly after a rain but keeps on its course always. And here even gossip is of a gentle nature. Lucy, most skilled in the diffusion thereof, is most ready to throw "her own sunshine into shady places" and to "hope and doubt" as long as either is possible.

Here, too, in this country town, allowance is made for the habits and foibles of another, even more serious failings are overlooked. If Mr. Sidney chooses, when out for dinner on Sunday, to take a nap before the fire, he is at peace so to do. And if he scolds unduly over his nightly game of whist, there is no one who does not pardon him, even while he continues to offend. No backbiting, lying, or slander shadow the serenity of these people's hearts. Sorrow there must be; but, tempered by the pity of others, it slips over or round the lives of these villagers. Ellen's blushes are not unseen, and Colonel Falkner, Sir Charles Grandison's true descendant, meets a sympathetic listener as he pours forth his love

for "Ellen, the pure, the delicate, the divine, the whitest and sweetest of owers, the jessamine, the myrtle, the tube-rose, among women". For in *Our Village*, men are as solicitous for their neighbors as for themselves; as anxious to relieve the mishaps of another as their own. At the hands of a father, consolation is ready for the baby ousted from the place of supremacy by the advent of another claimant to attention. Likewise maidens disappointed by one lover find another all ready to soothe the not very greatly bleeding heart. Mildness and gentleness towards others, a trust that these will be found in all mankind, and a casual indifference to one's own unhappiness—these are the qualities of an idyllic heart.

Social distinctions melt away as ice from trees on a warm day. There remains always a faint line of demarcation between employer and employed, mistress and maid, laborer and farmer; yet the shading comes not from condescension or from a consciousness of superiority, but rather from a difference in the greater degree of kindness which it is possible for the more affluent to show to their poorer neighbors. It is almost as if one group of children treated another group, not as their equals but as children. Perhaps only in *Our Village* is it possible to maintain such a delicate adjustment. But where rank and prestige are ignored, they are easily regarded and do not slip away altogether at any time. In the teams and spectators of the country cricket match, in the Bramley maying, in the harvesting of hay, there is an indiscriminate and joyous mixing of humble and high, cultured and rustic. And then, too, in that happy village, no one is so very refined and no one so very boorish as to bring discord into any gathering. In its softening atmosphere, even gypsies take on the attributes of civilization, and steal no more than chickens or other like fowls. It is impossible to speak very ill even of the fortune-teller, when her necromancy is so well tinged with a common sense and perspicuity far removed from the dangerous wiles of most such seers. And like the gentle folks, the gypsy hides a lurking smile at the follies of the simple villagers. There, social distinctions rest on degrees of charity and not of rank, and where each group does deeds of kindness to those still further below them, Lucy's mistress for Lucy and the poor widow for those even more indigent, there can be no

arbitrary line of division between classes. A whole community rejoices or mourns or lends aid, and not one narrow circle only.

The country, too, is eternally pleasant to the heart, whether there be storms, ice, or heat, or soft summer winds and banks thick-laid with ivy, brier roses, and fox-glove. Flowers do not wait to spring behind one in one's path. They are the path itself. No season is loveliest, because nature is loveliest in all seasons, and brings out all her treasures to make *Our Village* and its people beatific. Miss Mitford takes the longest—and the prettiest—lanes in her walks. And so, perhaps, do the rest of the villagers who all seem to have leisure to live in a flowery spot. The sunny slopes are covered in summer days with oxlips, arums, orchises, wild hyacinths, ground ivy, pansies, strawberries, and heart's ease. But it is heart's ease to wander over fields and through places thus redolent with sweetness. Even the "early, innocent brown snake" . . . "winding among the young blossoms or rustling amongst the fallen leaves", is not repulsive. When fall comes, it preserves the beauty of summer until it can offer its own new glories of rich foliage and clear, brilliant days. The rains of September preserve to the "herbage all the freshness and verdure of spring . . . the harebell is on the banks and the woodbine in the hedges, and the low furze which the lambs cropped in the spring" bursts again in to its "golden blossoms". Beauty is thus transient but perpetual as the children in *Our Village* who are not forever of the same generation, but are forever there in plenty, even to a profusion as great as that of daisies and roses in June. And in winter still, season of "bare, ruined choirs", the sun shines on, and one is minded, not of the leafless boughs but of the sweet birds who sang so lately in the trees. With Nature the quality of compensation is not strained; no change in weather but brings its joys. And Nature is not bliss-producing only to grown people, only to the wise of the world who need refreshment for the eyes and the soul. The rapture of nutting is incomparable to, unsurpassed by, any other delight out of doors. May, the ever-present and companionable dog, is enchanted by this sport. Half the love-making and half the match-making in the hamlet is begun, made sure, or completed in a basket of nuts, "the universal tribute of country galantry". Nature exists for the fat and pudgy youngsters, too, who rejoice in the rain and the mud so reviled by their elders. "Dirty,

noisy, healthy, and happy", three or four imps in tattered frocks dabble "by the side of a pond with the ducks and the geese", or help the pigs to find acorns in the woods. Nature is impartial if man cannot learn to be so.

These chirruping and robin-like sketches are in strange contrast to the grimness and dreariness of George Crabbe's picture of the same scenes. The idyllic work of Miss Mitford is not cousin, even once removed, to *The Village*. The kinship is comparable only to that between collateral lines descending from Adam through Jephath and Shem. Miss Mitford sees only the buttered side of country life, while Crabbe is perhaps just as one-sided, but views only the under half. The roseate hue of peace, contentment, ease, plenty, and virtue does not rest upon the landscape for him, for he knows too well the futility of labor expended upon sterile soil, the exertion which amounts to nothing and brings a return, not of wealth but of broken health and subsequent poverty. He perceives that nature whose suns, storms, weeds, and cold suck the vitality from all who trust their lives to its mercy. He ignores the truths so apparent to many, that hunger means happiness, and privation, ethical conduct. His villagers in a miserable struggle to eke out their hand to mouth existence, waste their youth and their vigor only to gain a temporary subsistence; and then, their strength expended, find themselves prematurely aged, with no refuge but the poor house. There, under the tender ministry of a quack doctor, their bodies are condemned to death and their souls, untended by the whist-playing, "game-preserving curate", are left to shift for themselves. Oppressed by a nature which receives all, and as a recompense for its barren aid demands still more, there is small wonder that the villagers are not free from the vices of the wealthy, that they drink, smuggle, and prostitute. This description of country life is not *Our Village*, however. So much for Crabbe. It is expedient to return to the fold of Miss Mitford, but bearing in mind the contrast as a reference text for the veracity, or at least the wholeness of view and the clear penetration of the sprightly and cheerful Miss Mitford.

But Miss Mitford is not altogether unreal, for her little houses, her publican in his red, square cottage, her sunshine on lilacs, her large family in an inelegant home, are not mere airy trifles, flutings of the imagination. They are most visible, and if the bricks

or wood glow blissfully in the sun, it is the light and not the substance which is non-existent. The houses are indisputable and the people who dwell therein. And what more probable, after all, than that a landlord retired from business should find nothing more pressing to do than to hang over his gate in talk with his neighbors, enticing the unwary into a discourse upon liberty or Queen Anne? What endowed more unmistakably with a tangible reality than the nests of the wasps he so obligingly blows up for his friends? The village, to all intents and purposes is as much of flesh and blood as any other hamlet in the Berkshires. The shoemaker who sits dogged and unmoved at his last during illumination and uproar; the fat children who live in the spruce and sash-windowed tenement house; the little white building of angles and additions, all oddities and misfits covered over with vines, roses, and hollyhocks; are earthly and not paradisiacal, of this world and not of fairyland. And of time—and eternity—but certainly of reality, is the belle of the village, daughter to the proprietor of the Rose Inn, with her "curl-papers in the morning like a porcupine" and her "curls in the afternoon like a poodle". Not in the town and not in its inhabitants lies unreality, but in Miss Mitford herself who diffuses over people and peopled an idyllic glow of the heart.

The farmers furthermore and their fields, barns, animals, and implements, are too much matters of fact to be overlooked. They are, in a way, the centres in a mesh of lace, very stabilizing and very satisfactory. They lend body to a flowery and sunshiny, but, at times, too rarified, atmosphere. The "thick, solid suburb of ricks . . . the stables, cart-houses, cow-houses, granaries, and barns placed at all angles toward each other and mixed with smaller habitations for pigs, dogs, and poultry", an eminently practical group, cannot dissolve into airiness, as much else in *Our Village* might very conceivably do. The presence of horses, oxen, cows, calves, heifers, sheep, and pigs at the Great Farm House conveys a picture of bustling, animated country life. There is still a call for credulity, for the business of this farm goes on like machinery, and even though the times are hard, the master of the place manages so capably that he can afford to show a hearty hospitality to all his neighbors. The note of superiority or perfection must needs appear even here! Moreover, Hannah, to recall the dear,



diligent child, although her energy and skill may be doubted by those who live purely by reason, certainly does raise real chickens, and produce real vegetables in her garden. The floods of the Lodden, "the mighty river", wreak real harm to real fields; and the hay which they rot and the corn which they carry off have been grown only at the expense of much genuine hard labor. If it were not for the farms in the community, if it were not for its "harvest home" festivals which can come only after honest hoeing, planting, and cultivation in hot summer afternoons, *Our Village* would be located in impossible space. But this environment of the country, its small truck farms cultivated by the owner and his sons themselves, its large estates, its scuffling, hard-working laborers, and its landowners who can afford to employ tenants, gives life and corporeal existence to the village. It is an existence which is continued from generation unto generation by the intermarriage of farmers' daughters with the sons of the butchers, grocers, and gamekeepers of the hamlet.

And last of all, a very sweet touch of reality is added to *Our Village* in the truth of the little doings of its people, their everyday occupations and their habits of dress and thought. What they love and what they disregard is as truly the result of their environment as what they eat and how they live. It is well, then, to know that they detest, insofar as in them lies the power, the French Revolution as dangerous to all right principles, and as wrong in the particular introduction of change. For of innovation *Our Village* will have none, whether of roads, dress, or revolution. No old things will it relinquish, scrap dinners, loose clothes hanging easily and roomily, or Tory politics. Even labor-saving farm implements are put to scorn. And after all, what need to use such novelties? Even in the case of the most hard-pressed and frugal, there is time and to spare for the delights of life, for cribbage, illuminations, whist, sketching, gardening, embroidery, and the collection of ribbons and bright china. And it is almost foolish to draw a line between that which is work and that which is play. Mrs. Mosse finds her most acute misery in inactivity, and her most real pleasure in "the numerous and undefined avocations of a gentleman's family . . . shelling peas, paring apples, splitting French beans, washing china, darning stockings, hemming and mending dusters and house-cloths, mak-

ing cabbage nets, and knitting garters." Mrs. Frances and Mrs. Theodosia, if they do not pass the time in identical employments, are at least similarly engaged, but their dull moments are enlivened by a richer form of entertainment. Novelists and poets, reminiscences of Miss Fielding, Miss Mulso—they never learned to call her Mrs. Chapone,—and the ever beloved Richardson, diversify their study of cookbooks or their superintendence of the endowed girls' school. And with these amusements and these deeds of charity, the donation of "flannel petticoats or the loan of baby things; visiting in a quiet way, and going to church whenever the church door" is open, the hours from day to day pass happily, and to the contentment of all.

Miss Mitford, too, passes happily over all these little incidents and scenes of reality and unreality, touching some with light and some with shadow, always deftly, always delicately. Her laughter is of smiles and not chuckles; her sorrow of sympathy and not grief. And always the dewy verbiage of her sketches is as fresh—and abundant—as the damp grass of a June morning.

RUTH ELIZABETH CAMPBELL.

Wellesley College.

### ELUSIVE

I could not set you in a measured frame  
As one surrounds a sketch with narrow gold;  
Aquamarine and silver do not hold  
In a neat pattern fitted with a name.

The colors of an abalone shell  
Are not more evanescent than the play  
Of light upon your moods—I look away—  
And only then I seem to see you well.

LORETTA ROCHE.

## A SPECTATOR OF LIFE:

HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

It seems somehow appropriate to run on the *Diary* of Henry Crabb Robinson in a second-hand book store, where its faded covers, bevelled after an archaic fashion, are dusty with neglect and yet noble with "forgotten loyalties" and suggestive of the tarnished wit that lingered over from the moribund eighteenth century. It carries us back to an age of quaint and eccentric characters; one hears the voice of Dr. Parr as he wields a Johnsonian bludgeon on impertinence: "Sir, you are a young man; you have read much, thought little, and know nothing at all." One sees the ugly little Crabb at three years, the son of a "handsome couple" of Dissenters, catechised with, "Dear child, can you tell me what you are?" and answering, "I am a child of wrath like unto the others." Dreaming among the shadowy book-shelves, one is also reminded of the now distant spirit of the Romantic period, yet startled at the fact that this discolored *Diary* links 1775 with 1867. For it is the diary of a man who nearly spanned two epochs and died on the threshold of a third, whose earliest literary recollection was memorizing a new poem called *John Gilpin* (1782) and whose last reading was in Matthew Arnold's *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time*. Although its present form is lamentably meager (for it exists as yet only in Sadler's abridgement of 1869), it fairly bursts with a rich and varied account of the English literary world between 1795 and the days of Gladstone. As a boy, Robinson thrilled at the news of the Bastille; in his last years he read with pleasure the speeches of Lincoln. Throughout the length of his ninety-one years he seems to have devoted himself entirely to the role of spectator at the procession of life. He has been called (perhaps naturally) an eccentric, a "character", a dilettante; and he once thought of calling the record of his memories *The Retrospect of an Idle Life*. Undoubtedly such a reputation troubled him little. That a prospective acquaintance was known to have queer or fantastic habits only led him later to preface an anecdote with the words, "He is a character".

Perhaps few of us are familiar with the facts of his life, though doubtless our grandfathers did not consign him to the almost com-

plete oblivion which has apparently overtaken him at our hands. Few of us know that he was born at Bury St. Edmunds, March 13, 1775, and was buried at Highgate, February 5, 1867; that his long and rich experience was begun inauspiciously under an attorney at Colchester where as a child he had seen the aged John Wesley held up to speak to a vast assemblage; that with a small inherited income in 1798 he toured the Continent and became a student at Jena in 1802, tried vainly to enter the diplomatic service, and finally became the first war correspondent—for the *Times*—by reporting Napoleon's Peninsular Campaign; that he went to the bar in 1813 and joined the Norfolk circuit, which he served until he retired, as he had purposed, when his income amounted to 500 pounds, in 1828; and that throughout the remaining thirty-nine years he occupied himself with reading, making acquaintances with the great, touring the Continent and the British Isles, helping to found the Athenaeum and University College, to which latter he added enlargements of the Flaxman Collection of drawings and busts. He was nine years old when Dr. Johnson died; he was twenty when Dr. Arnold was born, twenty-three when the *Lyrical Ballads* appeared, twenty-five when Macaulay was born and had more than seven years to live when Macaulay died, thirty-six on the appearance of *Childe Harold*, thirty-nine when *Waverly* was published, fifty-eight when *Sartor Resartus* began in Fraser's. In 1845, at seventy, he characterized Tennyson's poems as "enigmatical riddles full of genius"; and he lived beyond the publication date of Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*. There is a great leap from his boyhood, in which he undoubtedly heard the latest *bon mot* of Dr. Johnson, to his old age, when young men were chanting, "the hounds of spring are on winter's traces".

There is an element of anomaly in the life of any of us, but Robinson's life was perhaps unusually full of it. He seemed ever to be reconciling opposites. In bridging two antithetical periods, he carried over into the Romantic generation some of the tastes of the Neo-classic; in 1811 he preferred the classical qualities of *The Castle of Indolence* to *Thalaba*, and yet ten years later he wrote in his *Diary*, "Finished Johnson's 'Hebrides.' Feel ashamed of the delight it once afforded me." He was later to say, in 1843, that before the *Lyrical Ballads* revolutionized his tastes, the four books which he "read incessantly" were *The Rape of the Lock*,

*Comus*, *The Castle of Indolence*, and *The Traveler*. Without ever quite forgetting the charm of his early loves, he reached out appreciatively to the new poetry, so that his friend, De Morgan, could say of him that the last of the Lake School was not a poet, but a man interested less in poetry than in real life, in men, in a fairly satirical mode of expression. The bosom friend of Wordsworth found less pleasure in nature than in a witty breakfast party.

As a man, Robinson united a mysterious faculty of charming the great spirits of the age with a singular and conscious physical oddity that amounted to ugliness. Of "old Crabb" in his final years, one might be pardoned for reflecting, "And *this* is the man who was the friend of Goethe and is the friend of Wordsworth!"—or whispering with Clough, after one of Robinson's breakfasts, "Not at all the regular patriarch!" The portrait by Scharf (1860) is obviously something between an over-realistic sketch and a caricature. We see the profile of a seemingly little man, sitting hunched-up at a little writing table, his large gray head sunken between his shoulders, his long thin hair falling nearly to the lapel; his high forehead, flat nose, and protruding under-jaw forming an amused and quizzical expression, enhanced by his spectacles, as he writes with what seems to be an impotent little hand. But he capitalized his ugliness much as Lamb utilized his stammering; he often punctuated the climax of an anecdote by suddenly thrusting out his prominent chin and slowly drawing it back as the significance of the story got about. No doubt it was partly because of this happy ability to reconcile an unprepossessing exterior with a genial and anecdotic soul that Robinson won his way into the heart of nearly every noted person of a half century.

Another paradox presents itself when we reflect that, wide as his literary acquaintance was, he left behind him, except his *Remains*, nothing but a small volume on Gall and Spurzheim's *Craniology* (1807), and a translation of a German fairy tale, *Amatonda*, by Anton Wall (1811), both of which were flat failures. Rather than attempt original literary work he seems to have preferred aiding others; in contributing, for example, valuable material to Gilchrist's *Life of Blake*, Mrs. Austin's *Characteristics of Goethe*, and Talfourd's *Final Memorials of Charles Lamb*.

Perhaps the most ironic anomaly of all, however, was his fear



that old age was overtaking him prematurely. As early as 1817 he wrote to his brother, "the infirmities of old age are growing fast upon me, and loss of memory is the chief". Three years later, some forty-seven years before his death, he writes in his *Diary* that on reading the *Eve of Saint Agnes* he observed an unusual drowsiness: "It quite affects me to remark the early decay of my faculties. I am so lethargic that I shall soon be unable to discharge the ordinary business of life . . ." In another letter, in 1842, he writes, "My presentiment becomes stronger every day that I shall die suddenly, without previous illness, and not live to be very old". It is a common opinion that bachelors must forego the hope of longevity, but somehow Robinson managed to maintain his grip on life at every stage. The truth is that he had very nearly perfect health. His habits were not, and did not have to be, unusually careful; he read at every possible moment, sitting, riding, or walking. "Rode to Witham on the outside of the Colchester coach", he wrote in December 27, 1815, "and amused myself by reading Middleton's *Letters from Rome*." "On my ride to London outside the Bury coach (Jan. 21) I read part of Goethe's *Autobiography* with great pleasure." "To London on the Bury coach (Oct. 23, 1821) . . . I was outside reading. I read Cantos III, IV and V of *Don Juan*. I was amused by parts." "I was occupied during my walk in reading Schlegel's *Vorlesungen* (Sept. 13, 1812) . . . Rather fatigued, though my walk was not a long one—only eighteen or twenty miles." These are typical entries. But perhaps his fears of premature old age should not be stressed; in a *Diary* covering ninety-one years, three expressions of such a fear are not many.

What made Robinson so successful in his intimacies with such men as Goethe, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, Blake, Flaxman? The answer is probably two-fold: his power of conversation and his charming modesty. The first depended largely on his wide reading and his prodigious memory. It is perhaps not too much to surmise that he read all of the important English and German books of his time. He apparently was that joy of every author's heart: a curious, sympathetic, creative reader. Backed up by a vast store of information and reminiscence, his comical habit of self-depreciation must have endeared him to all his associates. He seems always to be intimating that he has thrown his life away

and rejoices in the permission to live vicariously in the happiness of others. His manner of address often took the form of, "I speak to you with the respect with which a person like myself ought to speak to a great—". Here insert, says De Morgan, *scholar, mathematician*, etc., as the case may be. In an age of social decorum, such careful self-effacement meant much. Or he might suddenly state, "I am nothing, never was anything, not even a lawyer". But perhaps the most striking modesty came when, at the end of several anecdotes related with astonishing clearness, running back through two generations, he would admit, when at a loss regarding a name, "You see that my memory is quite gone; though that is an absurd way of talking, for I never had any". However, his humility could at times yield to a disarming and disconcerting candor. It was his candor that won Madame de Staël. To her characteristically sudden and bald question, "Are you rich?" he replied instantly, "As you please to take it; I am either a rich man of letters or a poor gentleman." Later on she spoke disrespectfully of Goethe's *Natürliche Tochter*, and drew from him, "Madame, vous n'avez pas compris Goethe, et vous ne le comprendrez jamais." Such plain dealing could never halt the undaunted lady whom neither Goethe, Schiller, nor Napoleon could quell: "Monsieur, je comprends tout de qui merite d'etre compris; ce que je ne comprends n'est rien." It must have been a queer and irresistible mixture of docility and independence that made the charm of Henry Crabb Robinson in conversation.

There is no record of any of his conversations degenerating into argument. If pressed, he probably preferred a conversational argument to an argumentative conversation. Before he became a figure and a "character," he undoubtedly had the secret of the perfect listener. On April 22, 1816, he records having listened to an old couple relate "family anecdotes and village narratives:" "I am always an interested listener on such occasions. I am never tired by personal talk. The half-literary conversation by half-learned people, the commonplaces of politics and religious dispute, are to me intolerable; but the passions of men excited by their genuine and immediate personal interest always gains my sympathy . . ." We know that he was a consolation in times of grief and distress. "Old Crabius," as Lamb called him, was especially welcomed by Mary Lamb on January 12, 1835, a few days after

her brother's death. "On my going into the room . . .," he wrote, "she exclaimed with great vivacity, 'Oh, here's *Crabby*!'" From Rydal Mount, in December of the same year, he received the usual invitation to make Christmas what it would not be without him, and the assurance from Wordsworth, "No Crabb, no Christmas." But nowhere in the *Diary* is his delicate curiosity and careful effort at sympathetic understanding so manifest as in the entries for December, 1825, and January, 1826. The entry for December 10 begins with a significant question, "Shall I call Blake artist, genius, mystic, or madman? Probably he is all. I will put down without method what I can recollect of the conversation of this remarkable man." For several pages we behold Robinson skillfully drawing Blake out, putting a careful question here, tentatively expressing an opinion there, and in general winning his way into Blake's confidence as far, perhaps, as any of Blake's friends ever went.

Later in life, when he had entered upon his inevitable career as talker, he tended more and more to live up to Madame de Staël's remark about Coleridge, that he was "very great in monologue, but that he had no idea of dialogue." He tended to value a friend by his capacity to listen. His anecdotes cascaded everywhere. The breakfasts to which he invited the brighter students of University College grew cold as he dwelt over a reminiscence of Wieland or Herder and forgot to permit the appearance of the next course. (Walter Bagehot at last ate his breakfast before he came). His anecdotes never varied in their phraseology; the story told at William Godwin's house in 1816 would be verbally the same when told at the Athenaeum in 1866. Samuel Rogers once warned his company at breakfast, "If there is anyone here who wishes to say anything, he had better say it at once, for Crabb Robinson is coming." Toward the end, there were moments when the old dilettante lost his temper; on Bagehot's unguarded expression of his preference for Hazlitt over Lamb, Robinson turned on him: "You, sir, *you* prefer the works of that scoundrel, that odious, that malignant writer to the exquisite essays of that angelic creature!" The young Bagehot fairly committed *lèse-majesté*, we fear, in replying that the condition of being an angel does not of itself argue the ability to write so well as Hazlitt. But these instances are perhaps unrepresentative of the conversational powers

that in time made Robinson one of the most venerable and most sought-after men of the period. He left the memory of an age when one agreed with Dr. Johnson: "John Wesley's conversation is good, but he is never at leisure . . . This is very disagreeable to a man who loves to fold his legs and have his talk out, as I do." For Robinson, conversation was more than discussion; it was perfect companionship.

His *Diary* is the mirror of its writer. While it lacks the richness of personality and the vivid narrative to be found in Pepys' *Diary*, it is less stern and restrained than Evelyn's. It can in no real sense of the term be called literature. Of his limitations as a writer Robinson was quite thoroughly aware. "I early found," he said, "that I had not the literary ability to give me such a place among English authors as I should have desired; but I thought that I had an opportunity of gaining a knowledge of many of the most distinguished men of the age, and that I might do some good by keeping a record of my interviews with them." He became in time sufficiently aware that he even lacked in an eminent degree the "Boswell faculty." But if his *Diary* lacks the genius of Pepys or Boswell, it compensates in some measure by an overflow of enthusiasm and animal spirits, and by the conscious effort at insight which he brought to bear upon whatever interesting mind he met. On the whole it is a meticulous and sober account, with only an infrequent flash of humor or irony. The various kinds of material to be found in it perhaps classify themselves thus (in the order of their interest to-day): anecdotes of the literary world, *bon mots* and stories of non-literary circles, entries which echo the great political upheavals through which he lived (the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848, the Reform Bill of 1832, etc.), accounts of several tours, strikingly casual mentions of men and events now considered significant, entries containing something of the bizarre, and theological notes. The length of even the frugal edition by Sadler will permit only the most limited discussion here.

Perhaps the richest anecdotic material is that relating to Goethe and Wordsworth, the two great subjects of his reminiscent conversations and discourses. Robinson first met Goethe in 1801, in Weimar. The meeting was short, and the young Englishman lapsed instantly into awed gazing while Goethe conversed with a



friend. We learn that Goethe "was about fifty-two years of age, and was beginning to be corpulent. He was," says Robinson, "one of the most oppressively handsome men I ever saw." Once outside, and the interview successfully over, Robinson sighed in relief, "Gott sei Dank!" Three years later a second meeting took place. Aside from Goethe's eagerness to renew acquaintanceship there is little note except that Goethe expressed what is to most readers of *Otway* a strange judgment: that the comic scenes of *Venice Preserved*, which are considered so bad that they are never acted, are especially good, in that they justify the conspiracy. The last and most protracted visit occurred in the summer of 1829. Robinson notes the great physical change in Goethe: "Now I beheld the same eyes, indeed, but the eyebrows were become thin, the cheeks furrowed, the lips no longer curled with fearful compression, and the lofty, erect posture had sunk to a gentle stoop." Through five evenings the two men exchanged opinions on a great variety of subjects, Goethe relaxing into frank statements like, "No doubt all truth comes from God; but the Church! There's the point. God speaks to us through this flower and that butterfly; and that's a language these *Spitzbuben* don't understand"—or admitting that, "We poets are much more matter-of-fact people than they who are not poets have any idea of"—or uttering the rather dubious remark that there is no padding Byron's poetry—or expressing a reverence for Power in all its forms, and thus admiring the young Thomas Carlyle—or returning to Byron and saying that the verses on George IV were the sublime of hatred.

And yet, however, much he revered Goethe, he enjoyed more the company of Tieck and other less massive intellects. He had already, in 1802, met and liked Schelling, of whom he wrote, "he had the countenance of a white negro, if the contradiction may be pardoned,—that is, the curly hair, the flat nose, and thick lips, without the color of the African." Herder he had visited twice in 1803, and on lending him the *Lyrical Ballads* had found him in close agreement with Wordsworth on poetical language. Of Schiller he had seen comparatively little, remarking in 1801, however, that Schiller "had a wild expression and a sickly look . . . a mixture of the wildness of genius and the awkwardness of the student . . . his features were large and irregular." Wieland had expressed to him in 1805 his fondness for Prior and Gay, and



his conviction that English literature had declined since the age of Queen Anne. On the whole, Robinson's experiences in Germany were very happy; being, as he later explained, the only Englishman at Jena in those early days, he had unusually easy access to the most select circles. His charming encounters there were to take on a sort of sacredness; he would never brook the slightest disparagement of Germany. In the innermost places of his affection and reverence only Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Lamb were permitted to share a place with Goethe.

He did not meet Wordsworth until five years after he had lent Herder the *Lyrical Ballads*. It was on March 15, 1808, at one of Charles Lamb's breakfasts. The two found themselves at complete harmony on politics; and Robinson's zeal over the *Ballads* had already come to Wordsworth's ears. He quickly adjusted himself to the poet's ways, and wrote, "Wordsworth, in my first tête-à-tête with him, spoke freely and praisingly of his own poems, which I never felt to be unbecoming, but the contrary. He said he thought of writing an essay on 'Why bad Poetry pleases.' He never wrote it,—a loss to our literature." From this time on, for forty-three years, Robinson shared some of Wordsworth's most intimate experiences. He shared his enthusiasm for Jane Porter and Joanna Baillie. In the Italian tour, he understood Wordsworth's tendency to appreciate the sights of Italy less than two beautiful little girls playing in the Arena, whom he wished to carry off to Rydal Mount. He understood why, in speaking of the rejected line, "Three feet long and two feet wide," Wordsworth said dryly, "it ought to be liked." He even understood him when he wrote in 1821, "As to poetry, I am sick of it; it overruns the country in all the shapes of the Plagues of Egypt . . ." He has an amusing anecdote about Wordsworth's fame in 1816, eighteen years after the *Lyrical Ballads*. After a Mr. Hutton had conferred with Wordsworth about the sale of Richard Wordsworth's land, Robinson was drawn aside and asked, "Is it true,—as I have heard reported,—that Mr. Wordsworth ever wrote verses?" He relates also that Rogers once said to the poet, "If you would let me edit your poems, and give me leave to omit some half-dozen, and make a few trifling alterations, I would engage that you should be as popular a poet as any living", whereupon Wordsworth replied, "I am much obliged to you, Mr. Rogers; I

am a poor man, but I would rather remain as I am". Yet Robinson was among the first to perceive Wordsworth's shortcomings, even to agree with Jeffrey that *The White Doe of Rylstone* was "the very worst poem ever written." He early saw that *The Excursion*, "too mystical to be popular," would have few readers and would bring the "imputation of dullness" upon its author. No doubt it was Wordsworth the man as well as Wordsworth the poet that held Robinson's affection and loyalty. The tours into Italy, Scotland, and Switzerland, the frequent visits and jubilees at Rydal Mount, bore witness to the companionability of the two men. He last saw Wordsworth at the funeral of Hartley Coleridge (January 11, 1849), and left Rydal with the feeling that all was well there. The entry containing the announcement of Wordsworth's death is as brief and reserved as are all the others that tell of the deaths of his friends: "*April 23d* (1850).—This day will have a black mark in the annals of the age, for on this day died the greatest man that I had ever the honor of calling friend,—Wordsworth". The entry closes with a brief mention of Mrs. Wordsworth and of the newspaper notices.

Leafing through the *Diary*, one is amazed at the rich stream of *bon mots*, anecdotes, and amusing reflections which whirl and sparkle through a dark current of ephemeral political problems and theological preoccupations. From the incessant small-talk of "teas" and "breakfasts" there comes such an anecdote as that about Talleyrand, who on being asked by Madame de Staël what he would do if he saw her and Madame de Récamier in danger of drowning, replied, not after the usual version of the story, (that he would save Madame de Staël and then jump in and die with Madame de Récamier), but that, "Madame de Staël sait tant de choses que sans doute elle peut nager"! Robinson's version, as we know, is more in keeping with Madame de Staël's reputation. We read, too, of Lamb remarking of Coleridge, "He ought not to have a wife or children; he should have a sort of diocesan care of the world,—no parish duty". We read on, to the passage about Coleridge's discourse on *action* as the end of all, and learn that Robinson himself turned a very touching *bon mot*: some one said of Coleridge's remarks, "This is a satire on himself"; "No", replied Robinson, "it is an elegy".

There is little of interest to us now in those portions of the

*Diary* devoted to tours or to theological discussion. We yawn and leave behind us pages of discourse on Unitarianism, the Trinity, the Atonement, and pages given to tours in which Robinson, always partly the child of the eighteenth century, saw practically nothing of interest in nature, and everything in the personal traits of men. There is very little more richness in those entries reflecting the great political problems of the time. We read more about the Test and Corporation Act than about Waterloo. On June 23, 1815, he recorded, "I went to the Surrey Institution to read the detailed account of the glorious victory at Waterloo . . . After nine o'clock I walked to Ayrton's. The illuminations were but dull, and there were scarcely any marks of public zeal or sympathy. I stayed at Ayrton's till past one. Lamb, Alsager, etc., were there, but it was merely a card party".

Here and there we encounter an entry of a humorous, ironic, or bizarre nature. Frequently it is obvious that such an effect was not intended. Yet what shall we say about the following?: "*January 9th* (1816)—(At Norwich). This morning I went immediately after breakfast to a Jew dentist, C. . . ., who put in a natural tooth in the place of the one I swallowed yesterday. He assured me it came from Waterloo, and promised me it should outlast twelve artificial teeth". And how are we to "take" Robinson's assertion that Lamb had the finest collection of shabby books he ever saw? Such a number of first-rate works in very bad condition was, he thought, nowhere to be found. His intention may be much more humorous in the entry for March 24, 1843: "Looked over some letters of Coleridge to Mrs. Clarkson. I made an extract from one of a part only of parenthesis, as characteristic of his involved style: 'Each, I say (for, in writing letters, I envy dear Southey's power of saying one thing at a time, in short and close sentences, where as my thoughts bustle along like a Surinam toad, with little toads sprouting out of back, side, and belly, vegetating while it crawls),—each, I say,—'." Still more definite in tone is the record of Coleridge's contemptuous dismissal of Hume's preference for the French tragedians to Shakespeare, with, "Hume comprehended as much of Shakespeare as an apothecary's phial would, placed under the falls of Niagara". Occasionally one of Lamb's puns will liven up an otherwise dreary entry. On giving Lamb an account of his first legal experience and his first brief,

he was asked by Lamb, "Did you not exclaim,—*Thou great first cause, least understood?*" And so the entries run,—a cataract of impressions, gossipy anecdotes, records of unexpected meetings, of wise and witty observations overheard at table, a stream now turning muddy with speculations on eternal damnation or deism, flashing with a pun that convulsed one of Rogers' "breakfasts", now rising in quaint dignity over a stiff *bon mot* that no longer thrills, flowing gently and sedately in a long passage of rumination over a minor political crisis, damming up momentarily with a thick agglomeration of memories of such a long-forgotten personage as Mrs. Clarkson or Mrs. Barbauld . . . Truly a droll world, from this distance, a world full of a piety that is now quaint, of longings for a new dispensation, of momentary Byronic sneers, of echoes from Horace Walpole and Boswell, of Jane Austen heroines and the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, of interminable teas and endless conversations, of hysterical enthusiasms over German "tales of horror" and the majesty of Goethe, of delicate young ladies musing over the poems of Cowper, of thunderous *Reviews* shaking the literary heavens, of the mystery and magic of the Waverley novels, of Coleridge's mad and magnificent lectures, of Fraser's installments of an impudently unintelligible work called *Sartor Resartus* . . .

The most unconsciously charming feature of Robinson's work is the casual manner in which his entries often deal with men who have since his day gained classic significance. On January 10, 1824, he dined at Lamb's and heard a Mr. C. . . . "Break out at last by an opposition to Mr. (Edward) Irving, which made the good man so angry that he exclaimed: 'Sir, I reject the whole bundle of your opinions.' Now it seemed to me," adds Robinson, "that Mr. C. . . . had no opinions, only words, for his assertions seemed a mere *galimatias*". The Mr. C. . . ., of course, was young Thomas Carlyle, recently the translator of *Wilhelm Meister*, and as yet only a poor tutor. At a dinner-party at James Stephens, (Nov. 29, 1826), he "had a most interesting companion in young Macaulay, one of the most promising of the rising generation I have seen for a long time. He is the author of several much admired articles in the *Edinburgh Review* . . ." "Met to-day, August 14, 1830, the one man living in Florence whom I was anxious to know. This was Walter Savage Landor, a man of un-



questionable genius, but very questionable good sense . . ." On February 12, 1832, he invited to breakfast a "deep-thinking German scholar, a character, and a singular compound. His voice and manner, and even the style of his conversation, are those of a religious zealot, and he keeps up that character in his declamations against the anti-religious. And yet, if not the god of his idolatry, at least he has a priest and prophet of his church in Goethe, of whose profound wisdom he speaks like an enthusiast. But for him . . . he should not now be alive . . . But in strange union with such idolatry is his admiration of Bonaparte. Another object of his eulogy is—Cobbett! . . . Singular, and even whimsical, combinations of love and reverence these." Thus we have a picture of Carlyle, after four lonely and laborious years at Craigenputtock, hopelessly seeking in London a publisher for *Sartor Resartus*. A few weeks later he and Fonblanque were "joined by John Mill, certainly a young man of great talent. He is deeply read," adds Robinson, "in French politics . . ." Little did Robinson know that this "young man of great talent" was all the while sending to the "deep-thinking German scholar" far up in Craigenputtock great boxes of *mémoires* and histories of the French Revolution, and that he himself was to write in a letter from Rydal Mount on January 19, 1839, "I am slowly reading Carlyle's *French Revolution*, which should be called rhapsodies,—not a history. Some one said, a history in flashes of lightning . . . It is just the book one should buy, to muse over and spell, rather than read through. For it is not English, but a sort of original compound from that Indo-Teutonic primitive tongue which philologists now speculate about, mixed up by Carlyle *more suo*". But, alas! from these quickening lines we leap into a page and a half of his own rhapsodies over *The Natural History of Enthusiasm* by Isaac Taylor, and leave the lightning flashes of *The French Revolution* paling in the distance.

In the latter sections of the *Diary* we find him encountering Daniel Webster's "air of Imperial strength, such as Caesar might have had"; dining with "Rogers, the Dean of the poets" (1845), and meeting Alfred Tennyson of "eminent talent"; going "with a feeling of predetermined dislike" to meet Emerson at Lord Northampton, and finding his dislike vanishing instantly before the "most interesting countenance" full of "a combination of intelli-



gence and sweetness"; dining with "Mrs. Browning, the late Miss Barrett,—not the invalid I expected"—with a "handsome oval face, a fine eye," and a husband with a "very amiable expression" and a "singular sweetness about him".—What a magnificent list of friends and acquaintances! Besides those mentioned so far, there were in Germany the Duchesses Amelia and Louisa of Weimar, the von Arnim's, the Brentano's, Kotzebue, Arndt, Ranke, and later on, von Stein; in England there were Byron, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, Lockhart, Shelley, Southey, Barry Cornwall, Dickens, Macready, Bentham, Bulwer, Charles James Fox, Grote, Edmund Kean, Charles Kemble, Tom Hill (the original Paul Pry), Mrs. Gaskell, Lady Blessington, Lady Byron, Stopford Brooke, Count D'Orsay, Maria Edgeworth, John Forster, Hallam, Haydon, Mrs. Jameson, Letitia Landon, Holcroft, Lord and Lady Holland, Dr. Arnold, Dr. Chalmers, Sir Humphrey Davy, Jerdan, Harriet Martineau, Miss Mitford, Lord John Russell, Maurice, Talfourd, William Taylor, Milnes, Trelawney, Aubrey de Vere, Whewell, Wilberforce, Monkhouse, O'Connell, Moxon, Froude, Ruskin; among the French, Talleyrand, La Fayette, Benjamin Constant, David, the Abbé Grégoire, Thibaut; and in Italy there had been a meeting with Thorwaldsen. This list does not, of course, include numerous friends who enjoyed a very restricted or brief celebrity; nor is it based on the entire *Diary*, since Sadler's edition is not more than a twenty-fifth of the whole.

Robinson had apparently but three enthusiasms: the quest for theological certainty, the formation of great friendships and exhilarating acquaintanceships, and the uninterrupted reading of books. The narrow dogmatism of his Dissenting parents never ensnared him; he once defined the Church in his own terms as "An association of men for the cultivation of knowledge, the practice of piety, and the promotion of virtue". His liberal tendency to doubt hardened and closely formulated opinions he carried over into politics, and called himself a liberal conservative or a conservative liberal. He looked with distrust on the universal conservative reaction to the French Revolution, showed no apparent admiration for Napoleon, and shared in the spirit of 1830 and of 1848. But, as a spectator of life, he never fully gave himself to any cause. International in his interests, he lived in a world of ideas and memories and humane hopes. Just philosophical enough

to enjoy reading skillful theological discourses, he was never quite metaphysician enough to follow Hegel or Fichte, and saw no incongruity in turning from an elucidation of Kant to a rhapsody over the excellent expository power of Madge, his favorite Unitarian minister. During a visit of five weeks at Rydal Mount in the winter of 1839 he read carefully (after his characteristic fashion) Carlyle's *French Revolution*, Arnold's *Rome*, Gladstone's *Church and State*, part of Cicero's *Letters to Atticus*, and three formidable theological works by Isaac Taylor, besides several "things from Ben Jonson" and some German with Miss Harden and the Arnolds. For him, reading meant thoughtful study, entries in his *Diary*, abstracts of plots, outlines of books, extended critical notes in his letters to friends. Because the classical side of his education had never been adequate, his taste for ancient literatures was considerably stunted, and his omnivorous reading in English, German, and Italian soon prevented any careful retrieval of his loss. But, hearty in his love of the present and its living writers, he devoured the books of his friends almost as fast as they left the press. A typical sentence in an entry is: "As long as the night lasted I read Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, which Ticknor had lent me". (1837).

Age crept upon him very slowly. His faculties retained their vigor to the very end. He bought his first pair of spectacles at fifty (1825), and changed them but twice in twenty-six years; at seventy he observed no increased decay of his sight. His *Diary* is singularly free of remarks about his health. The vast well of memories continued to bubble-up to within a few days before his death. As an old man of exceptional hardihood he was inclined to over-estimate his strength and had to be warned not to talk for more than two hours. At eighty-eight, comfortable and absent-minded, he often forgot at noon a luncheon consisting of a biscuit and a glass of wine. He was eighty before he noted increased personal attentions, and heartily resented them: "I look upon every man who offers to help me with my coat as a deadly enemy". Twenty-three years before he died he mourned the rapid loss of his old friends; on August 28, 1844, he attempted to arrange his papers, but apparently lost the desire to continue, noting gravely: "Sometimes the friend is dead, and sometimes the friendship". By 1866, in spite of his surprisingly vigorous appearance,

he wakes early in the morning in a ruminating mood, "ruminating in an old-fashioned way", he writes in his *Diary* (in the volume he is not to finish); "all my musings turned to self-reproach. Were I a man of sensibility or acuteness, I know not what would become of me. I could not endure myself". In December he is writing to Cookson, "I am now beginning to *feel* old age. Till lately I was only talking about it . . ." "Growing old," he says to a friend, "is like growing poor, a sort of going down in the world". On January 31, five days before the end, he records, "During the last two days I have read the first essay on the qualifications of the present age for criticism. The writer maintains his point ably. A sense of creative power he declares happiness to be, and Arnold maintains that genuine criticism is. He thinks of Germany as he ought, and of Goethe with high admiration. On this point I can possibly give him assistance, which he will gladly—But I feel incapable to go on". Thus ends the last entry, a little incoherent in phrasing but representative of his never-satisfied intellectual curiosity. "On this point I can possibly give him assistance"—with these characteristic words Robinson's *Diary* closes. One remembers his aid in Gilchrist's *Life of Blake*, in Mrs. Austin's *Characteristics of Goethe*, and the tireless encouragement and friendship which he lavished among the literary workers of some sixty years. At the last, the memory of *John Gilpin* mingled with the ideas of Matthew Arnold and a new age.

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## THE IMMORTAL WORD-SMITH

### A STUDY OF SHAKESPEARE'S APPARENT POETIC DIGRESSIONS

Shakespeare's prepossession with words is one of the few undebated points about his genius. The evidences for the fact that he developed early an explicit doctrine of language are numerous and unmistakable. *Love's Labour's Lost*, possibly his first play, shows his interest emerging in concrete form in a half satiric treatment of Lyly's practice, which, nevertheless, reveals the fact that at the very outset of his career he recognized the temptation that fine writing presented. This explicit concern with a theory of diction never left him. It is present in the use he makes of high-sounding speeches in *Richard II* and in the discourses of *Troilus and Cressida*, not only those of Ulysses in Act I, but also the contest of gallantries between Hector and the Greeks in IV, v. And the first act of *King Lear* is another ironic chapter on the same theme in which Cordelia, for good and for evil, appears wrapped in a tragic fear of speech that Shakespeare himself might once have known.

The question, then, of the possible conflict between the dramatic and the purely poetic aspects of his plays is not on the face of it an absurdity. It represents, as it were, the two aspects of his genius. There is that passivity and willingness to receive impressions that Wordsworth posits as the prerequisite of a poet; and there is also the positive assertion of his own personality in the poetic phrase. The question of this paper is, Do these two ever come into actual conflict? Does Shakespeare's interest in writing the poetic phrase, a thing he could do supremely well, ever take precedence over interest in plot? Are there beautiful lines in the plays put in for their own sake only? The answer to such an inquiry presupposes certain æsthetic and philosophical tenets of belief: it can not be given apart from the most fundamental considerations.

The initial conflict between the demands of poetry and those of dramatic interest in any poetic drama is a temporal one. It is, indeed, the necessity of getting on with the play, concentrating

upon the outcome of events, and at the same time the necessity of pausing over the weighted lines of poetry. For it is the very nature of poetry that it demands being paused over and considered in detail. The easy glides of prose, the unimportant enclitics and transitions, are all removed, and the lines are heavy with words used often for their connotation as well as for their denotation—words selected for their fine excess of meaning and emotional content. And the real service of the poetry as such—to carry truth alive into the heart by passion—is felt most potently only when the poetic phrase is recognized for what it symbolizes, as well as for what it explicitly says. This conflict of the part and the whole every reader has felt, even with plays whose plot outline is perfectly familiar. We have to read them first with a rush to get the story, then again slowly for the language.

But this is inherent in the very nature of the art; it furnishes, in fact, that sense of struggle that is the main source of pleasure in the æsthetic experience, and it can not therefore be removed. Nor would we wish it done away with. For the development of plot does not demand brevity above all considerations, nor could a dramatist be true to his situations if he pruned away all embellishments of diction and left the bare skeleton of statements. Especially are the dramas of Shakespeare not bare, poor stories, but rich in every shade of mental process. And of necessity his heroes and heroines unpack their hearts with words. Consequently, we take for granted that no play can be reduced to such a form as A marries B and is misled by C into thinking B false and therefore kills her. We know that the very heart of the matter lies in what A, B, and C do and say.

Another consideration to be kept in mind as an hypothesis is the fact that extravagance is Shakespeare's great glory. He is always giving more than the strict requirements demand—in character, in business, and above all, in language. Sir Walter Raleigh has pointed out that among his gratuitous characters we number some of the most delightful figures in the Shakespearean gallery—Launce's dog Crab, Barnadine, Dogberry, Osric, Oswald. None of these are required by the plot; they come apparently from the abundance of Shakespeare's creative genius. And likewise with the language that presents character and situation: its one invariable characteristic is its wealth, its abundance of imagery; so that



we come to look for generosity of expression as the very essence of the Shakespearean line. To take only one small example, the coming of morning is thus varied in the plays—in one case,

The busy day,  
Wak'd by the lark, hath rous'd the ribald crows.  
*T. and C. IV, ii, 8-9.*

or

Yon gray lines  
That fret the clouds are messengers of day.  
*J. C. II, i, 103-04.*

or

But, look, the morn in russet mantle clad  
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill.  
*Ham. I, i, 166-67.*

Again,

Good morrow, masters; put your torches out.  
The wolves have prey'd; and look, the gentle day,  
Before the wheels of Phoebus, round about  
Dapples the drowsy east with spots of gray.  
*M. A. V, iii, 24-27.*

And, finally,

Look, love, what envious streaks  
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east;  
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day  
Stands tip-toe on the misty mountain top.  
*R. and J. III, v, 7-10.*

Certainly we could not quarrel about lack of dramatic fitness because we might not be able accurately to attribute the lines to Troilus, Cinna, Horatio, Don Pedro, and Romeo.

These considerations aside, the test in any case of whether or not a particular passage is dramatically pertinent can not rest upon rules about poetry and the drama: it must in every instance be judged empirically upon its own merits. Neither can such a study as this resolve itself into a statement of a dualistic theory about poetry. On the contrary, it denies it, and upon that denial bases the whole matter.

It seems to me obvious that the oft-stated dualism of character and plot is senseless and arbitrary, for in Shakespeare's plays the only plot there is is that which grows out of character; and the

only way we have of knowing character is by means of the revelations of plot. The study of the elements that go to make up any character is of course of the greatest importance; but what we have given is in the end a unity behind which we can not go. That is, any attempt to separate character and action is wholly artificial and has no ultimate significance, for actually the one has no existence apart from the other. So likewise and to a far greater degree is there the closest of all unions between words and the ideas they clothe. Form and content are united so indissolubly as to defy all analyses, even that capable of dividing bone and marrow, body and soul. The question is not, Does the language fit the idea, or is it perchance too "poetic" for it? For we have no possible way of knowing what Shakespeare's idea was save by the language in which he chose to express it. We are not given some power of divination by which intuitive processes reveal an inner mystery. Rather, the question becomes, What, in particular examples, was Shakespeare's conception of the situation? That conception, we know, did not always put the emphasis on action, but concerned itself often with the lyric expression of emotion. And we can not approach the investigation with any preconception of what the situation ought to be; we must accept the evidence of the passage itself. The point in many cases will be the suitability of various utterances to the characters to which they are given, or perhaps an inquiry into the functions of certain passages whose plot service is not always apparent. But in any case it is a psychological investigation with each example tested on its own merits.

There are, however, passages here and there in the plays whose immediate value is out of proportion to the service they render to the whole play. That perhaps states the case for this entire consideration, for it is after all a question of the balance between the immediate pleasure given by the lines themselves and the subordination of that to the effect of the whole. Note, too, that the conflict is the very stuff of which all art is made—the claims of the part and the whole and the final triumph of the whole.

There are some cases in which Shakespeare seems to wish certain information given or certain effects made, and to speak the lines he all but steps out of the character to whom he has given them. It is too much, in some instances, to say that the lines are out of character—we don't know whether they are or not—they

simply far transcend what we have been led to expect. An example that has been pointed out is from *Richard III* when the murderers of the young princes describe the children as

. . . girdling one another  
Within their alabaster innocent arms;  
Their lips were four red roses on a stalk  
Which in their summer beauty kiss'd each other.

Pretty lines, doubtless; but scarcely the language of murderers. Shakespeare's apology is to have the hard-hearted wretches completely undone by conscience and remorse, but we are not convinced.

Again, in the first part of *Henry IV*, is there any reason why Sir Richard Vernon, about whom we know almost nothing, should speak the most poetic lines in the whole play? He reports to Hotspur that the madcap Prince of Wales is on his way (IV, i, 97-110):

I saw young Harry, with his beaver on,  
His cushes on his thighs, gallantly arm'd,  
Rise from the ground like feather'd Mercury,  
And vaulted with such ease into his seat,  
As if an angel dropp'd down from the clouds,  
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus  
And witch the world with noble horsemanship.

Another example in which the necessity of getting a thing said is more apparent than the fitness of the speech to the teller is Gertrude's relating Ophelia's death in *Hamlet*. She says (IV, vii, 168-84):

There is a willow grows aslant a brook,  
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;  
There with fantastic garlands did she come,  
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,  
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,  
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:  
There, on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds  
Clambering to hang; an envious sliver broke,  
When down her weedy trophies and herself  
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,  
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up;  
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,  
As one incapable of her own distress,

Or like a creature native and indu'd  
Unto that element; but long it could not be  
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,  
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay  
To muddy death.

Regardless of the probability of the Queen's having been present to watch Ophelia drown herself, the passage sounds more characteristic of Ophelia than of Gertrude. And if it needs justification, the fact that it is a perfect suggestion of Ophelia is its excuse for being.

In *Troilus and Cressida* there is a similar instance. Troilus and Cressida exchange those ironic vows of constancy, and Cressida, it seems to me, speaks with a glory of which we are not sure she was capable (III, ii, 191-96):

If I be false, or swerve a hair from truth,  
When time is old and hath forgot itself,  
When waterdrops have worn the stones of Troy,  
And blind oblivion swallow'd cities up,  
And mighty states characterless are grated  
To dusty nothing, yet let memory, etc.

And, finally, in the fifth act of *Midsummer Night's Dream* Shakespeare gives us Theseus far more eloquent and penetrating words than we expect from the conqueror of Amazons when he has him say:

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet  
Are of imagination all compact:  
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,  
That is, the madman; the lover, all as frantic,  
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:  
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;  
And, as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.

Here the voice may be the voice of Theseus, but the words are the words of Prospero.

If the foregoing speeches may perhaps seem out of character, there is a type of digression in which the irrelevance is the most characteristic thing about the speaker. That is, while the speeches per se may not seem to be quite pertinent to the dramatic necessities of the moment, yet they do so admirable a service of characterization that they are more than justified. And that is indeed just the sort of intuitive characterization that is most effective.

Such are the speeches of the Bishop of Canterbury in the first act of *Henry V*. His authority has been invoked to set the ecclesiastical seal on the conquest of France, and he goes into the dark backward of time even as far as the book of Numbers to justify Henry's claim. Yet he is not content with that, but in true ministerial fashion goes to the bee, the eagle, the sea, etc., to find lessons to suit the situation. We are not particularly interested in the way England resembles a hive of bees, but we are amused by this evidence that the Bishop of Canterbury was true to type.

Likewise characteristic is the king's speech to Bertram in *All's Well* (II, iii, 125-50). Bertram has no particular liking for Helena; in fact, he would as soon marry his mother's maid. But the king, feeling that the virtues of the lady need only be pointed out, preaches a sermon on "Kind hearts are more than coronets", which, to put it mildly, is more effective in revealing his own character than in persuading Bertram.

The Queen Mab speech of Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* (I, iv, 55-95) has often been commented upon as being out of character. I do not feel that it is. A digression it certainly is, but one that has its dramatic purpose. It is Mercutio as virtuoso trying to charm Romeo out of his love-sick trance. He has tried various exhibitions of his wit, all to no purpose; and here he calls out the utmost limit of his art, delighted of course to have an audience and challenged by the difficulty presented in Romeo's inertness. The fact that it is all spun out of airy nothing, that it is obviously an exhibition, makes it all the more Mercutio's; and Romeo does not endear himself to us when he dismisses it all so unappreciatively.

The best illustration of the dramatic value of the irrelevant is the Richard of the latter part of *Richard II*. The king somehow gives character to the whole drama, for there is no play in which high talk more abounds. In the first act Shakespeare compensates



for disappointing us in the matter of the tournament between Mowbray and Bolingbroke by giving the most gorgeous encounter of words. And even after Mowbray has exhausted a quite extensive vocabulary of invective he still has words enough left after the sentence of banishment has been pronounced to speak thus about his linguistic shortcomings:

My native English now I must forego:  
And now my tongue's use is to me no more  
Than an unstringed viol or a harp,  
Or like a cunning instrument cas'd up,  
Or, being open, put into his hands  
That knows no touch to tune the harmony:  
Within my mouth you have engaol'd my tongue,  
Doubly portcullis'd with my teeth and lips,  
And dull, unfeeling, barren ignorance  
Is made my gaoler to attend on me.

But it is Richard himself who most abounds in talk that has nothing to do with the action of the play. When he begins to realize that he is not the very button on fortune's cap, he takes refuge in philosophizings about death and kingship. "Let's talk", he says, "of graves, of worms, and epitaphs". And then that best of subjects, "the lamentable tale of me", and how death pays so little respect to the divine right of kings:

For God's sake let us sit upon the ground  
And tell sad stories of the death of kings.

For the rest of the play Richard spends his time consulting the mirror to find the wrinkles care should make, studying to compare the world with his prison; in other words, relating his fate to the generally sad state of man and seeing himself large in the common woe. The point of it all is that Richard's sin is none other than the sin of irrelevance, and nothing could bring it out so well as these long sentimental wailings. There are fine phrases throughout them, as when he says to the queen,

I am sworn brother, sweet,  
To grim Necessity, and he and I  
Will keep a league till death,

and the royalty that should have adorned his actions goes into his words. The sad story of kings that this play tells is of the impositions the kingly state makes on common man—how he has to forego being philosopher, give up the rights of man to free exploration in the varied interests of humanity, and subdue the man to the king.

There is also another sort of apparent digression that is in reality no digression at all. In *Much Ado*, for instance, in the scene in which Hero prepares to bait Beatrice she says to Margaret,

Bid her steal into the pleached bower,  
Where honey-suckles, ripen'd by the sun,  
Forbid the sun to enter; like favorites,  
Made proud by princes, that advance their pride  
Against the power that bred it.

To see the necessity of such a passage we have only to think of the bare Elizabethan stage and remember that Shakespeare had to supply with his verse arbors in which to hide Beatrice, Benedick, Sir Toby and his eavesdropping crew, to say nothing of Titania's bower, moonlight on the banks around Belmont, and the whole forest of Arden. That the problem had presented difficulties to him we know from the fact that Quince had to have "one come in with a bush of thorns and a lanthorn, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine". Here are some of the means Shakespeare devised to present moonshine.

The whole lyric fifth act of *Merchant of Venice*, especially the lines devoted to theme of Lorenzo and Jessica out-nighting each other,

. . . how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:  
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins—

is all nothing but an attempt to give the setting, and one so successful that all the scenic extravagancies of Belasco can add little.

When Lysander says to Helena,

Tomorrow night, when Phoebe doth behold  
Her silver image in the wat'ry glass,

Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,—  
A time that lover's flights doth still conceal,—  
Through Athen's gates have we devised to steal—

he is merely setting the scene for the second act. And Oberon's famous

I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows

is another stage set. And when in *Julius Caesar* Brutus says,

The exhalations whizzing in the air  
Give so much light that I may read by them

he is supplying the deficiencies of producers who had not had the advantage of courses in lighting. The famous Dover cliff passage in *King Lear* is too well known to need comment.

The best example, of course, is the whole of *As You Like It*. The service of the lyrics has already been noted in supplying greenwood and holly trees, acres of rye, the flora and fauna of the enchanted place. For the rest Shakespeare insinuates such phrases as

... he lay along  
Upon an oak whose antic root peeps out  
Upon the brook that brawls along this wood,

or

If you will know my house,  
'Tis at the turf of olives here hard by

into the very body of the play so unobtrusively that we never realize what he is doing.

None of the examples in the foregoing discussion could properly be called digressions from plot interest due to a prepossession with language for its own sake. They all have their plot service, even those that are not tied by necessity to the characters. There are other cases of speeches whose plot connection is not so apparent.

In *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (II, vii, 24-38) Julia is planning to go in pursuit of Proteus and is talking to Lucetta about how stale and unprofitable is this business of waiting for her lover's return. She has already announced her intention of following

him, and Lucetta urges her to allay her passion slightly, to which Julia replies:

The more thou damn'st it up, the more it burns.  
 The current that with gentle murmur glides,  
 Thou know'st, being stopp'd, impatiently doth rage;  
 But when his fair course is not hindered,  
 He makes sweet music with th' enamell'd stones,  
 Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge  
 He overtaketh in his pilgrimage;  
 And so by many winding nooks he strays  
 With willing sport to the wild ocean.  
 Then let me go and hinder not my course:  
 I'll be as patient as a gentle stream  
 And make a pastime of each weary step,  
 Till the last step have brought me to my love;  
 And there I'll rest, as after much turmoil  
 A blessed soul doth in Elysium.

This is a charming speech for Julia and quite in character with the play, but the dramatic moment passes while she is saying it. We are interested in her providing herself with doubtlet and hose; we take for granted that her affection is of the proper quality.

A somewhat similar passage occurs in *Merchant of Venice* (II, vi, 8-19) in the scene of Jessica's elopement. Gratiano and Salario appear before Lorenzo arrives and comment on the not very subtle idea that pursuit, even in love, is better than capture. And Gratiano, who by Bassanio's account, speaks an infinite deal of nothing, illustrates his point thus:

Who riseth from a feast  
 With that keen appetite that he sits down?  
 Where is the horse that doth untread again  
 His tedious measures with the unbated fire  
 That he did pace them first? All things that are,  
 Are with more spirit chased than enjoy'd.  
 How like a younker or a prodigal  
 The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,  
 Hugg'd and embraced by the strumpet wind!  
 How like the prodigal doth she return,  
 With over-weather'd ribs and ragged sails,  
 Lean, rent, and beggar'd by the strumpet wind:

There is here and elsewhere in the play the fullness of speech, a tendency to embroider a not very remarkable idea that we see in *Romeo and Juliet*, preeminently in *Love's Labour's Lost*. The fact that this sort of thing disappears from the later plays shows that Shakespeare felt his own power with words and recognized it sometimes as a danger.

I have said nothing so far about the elaborate speeches and playing on words found in bewildering abundance in *Love's Labour's Lost*, for the reason that those speeches are by no means dramatically impertinent. *Love's Labour's Lost*, as has been remarked often enough, is a play about words; and if we wanted confirmation of the claim that for Shakespeare matter and style were one, we find it here. When Berowne renounces thrice pil'd hyperboles and is sent to converse with groaning wretches for the sake of his vocabulary, it is his experience and his thinking he is sent to reform. What Berowne learned Shakespeare knew already—that the word and the thought are the same.

One can not talk about Shakespeare's sense of the poetic phrase without noticing how effectively, how eloquently, the simplest language tells the story of strong emotion in the highly wrought passages. Shylock, who has from time to time said eloquent things without serious menace to the comedy of *Merchant of Venice*, very nearly shifts the whole balance of the play when he says,

I pray you give me leave to go from hence:  
I am not well. Send the deed after me,  
And I will sign it.

Another telling example is the case of Imogen. The romances as a whole, I think, show Shakespeare a little impatient with the limitations of drama and would not furnish many examples of any sort of pruning away to fit rules. On the contrary, there is in *The Tempest* one entire scene, the masque scene, designed apparently only for a show and for the opportunity to write beautiful lines. Consequently, against the vague richness of *Cymbeline*—an abundance that expresses itself even in Cloten's passion for adjectives—Imogen's speeches shine with a beautiful clarity. The



first scene, in which she takes leave of Posthumus, comes to a climax in her words,

O the gods!  
When shall we see again?

And a moment later when Cymbeline rebukes her, she says,

I am senseless of your wrath; a touch more rare  
Subdues all pangs, all fears.

Cleopatra dies with the simplest words on her lips:

As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle,—  
O Antony!

But the supreme example is, of course, *Lear*. Not only Cordelia's "No cause, no cause", but Lear's words in the last scene, from

She lives! if it be so  
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows  
That ever I have felt,

to

Pray you, undo this button

come as near as language can to the perfect fusion of word and thought.

Macbeth conspicuously among Shakespeare's heroes is the exception to this usage. His language is always highly poetic, and it all culminates in the "Tomorrow and tomorrow" speech. Perhaps the lack of simplicity can be accounted for by the fact that his emotions throughout the play are more varied than are those of any other character. Evil seduced him in the guise of Greatness, Power, the power that he recognized in himself; consequently, he never is certain when he is acting in accord with his destiny and when in opposition to it. He hopes by action to put an end to the confusion that tortured him; he hopes to wrest from Omniscience itself the answer to fate: but to the end of the play that confusion increases rather than finds resolution. The apparent digression on sleep when he relates the killing of Duncan to his wife (II, ii, 36-41) means only his preoccupation with a desire

for some release from the torturing doubt about fate. Lady Macbeth, whose problem was not the philosophical one and who kept her eye on the action, naturally interrupts him with "What do you mean"?

Macbeth's destruction, therefore, is the destruction of the reason, the inability to find or trust any solution of life. The immediate affections or tasks that serve as a refuge for most people he has sacrificed, and at the end he bursts out into that bitter condemnation of life itself:

It is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing!

The conclusion of the whole matter, as I see it, is that drama must be judged in its totality, that any separation into functions of plot and diction is a logical separation only for the purpose of analysis and has little meaning when thought of as real. There is no real conflict. Shakespeare's use is only the same point of view towards life and art that we find in *Twelfth Night* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, a plea for variety, for the heterogeneous, and a conviction that the services of poetry can scarcely be dispensed with anywhere.

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APROPOS OF A BIRTHDAY  
A CONVERSATION WITH HENRIK IBSEN

"What are you going to write?" asked a voice, as I slipped a fresh sheet into the machine and leaned back, blankly contemplating its own problematic blankness. A covert eagerness in the tone bespoke an especial interest.

"I wish I knew," I replied. "The afflatus is slow in its descent. But with the Ibsen centenary coming on apace it is evident that something must be written, and quickly."

"I am gratified that you thought of it all by yourself," came the response in relieved accents. "And possibly I can help your good cause along."

At this I turned around. Yes, that imperturbable picture on the wall really had come to life. On the instant the clock opposite struck twelve. Midnight. The bewitched hour, of course. What luck that I had not gone sensibly to bed and left this business for the dawn of a new tomorrow.

"You surely can!" I exclaimed. "In fact, you alone. For the only appropriate words for this occasion are those you would like to be said. Nothing is more exasperating to an artist than a critical aftermath of arrows shot wide of the mark or even bouquets tossed askew. But the zealous public, though it dotes on throwing things, is not a highly trained marksman, and the professional critics often officiate as the blind leading the blind. It was very smart of Bernard Shaw to explain in advance to the commentators what they should say about his plays. Too bad you did not realize the great usefulness of the Preface as a First Aid."

"In those Preludes Expository of his, Shaw was not so much shedding additional light as letting off more steam. Being a born missionary he was bound to do both. But crusading and converting was not in my line. Being an artist I was obliged to express, by the most effective medium and in the most competent manner at my command, my reactions to life. If some of these chanced to induce in the beholders ugly frothings at the mouth, raucous barkings, and other symptoms of rabies, I couldn't help that, any more than I could help the fulsome patter of those stricken with the worshipful infection. I could only ignore the one foolish fit with the other, or perhaps amuse myself with the retort humorous

in my next creation. But now that the returns are all in and are being appraised by a new generation, I do feel that a judicious estimate would be an acceptable birthday present for a centenarian. As I once remarked to Brandes, the most important thing is not to be blindly admired (and I should have added, or stupidly execrated) but to be understood."

"Precisely," I broke in. "And since the howling of the scared and scandalized, and the awed adulation of the quite overcome, are dying down together, we may bid good riddance to them both, and see if we can find out what's what in Ibsenism and if it has any real Quintessence. It is not, of course, that you are so enigmatic or equivocal. As a rule you are clear and conclusive enough. Confusion was caused for a while by the dust you raised flouting the orthodox. Now we are interested merely in fusing your various segments into a correctly interpreted whole. When a man writes twenty-five plays in fifty years and punctuates the last half of a century with the fairly rhythmic beat of their production, the next century naturally rises to inquire what they all amount to. Does this dramatic pageant present a coherent intellectual philosophy, a unified emotional timbre, a totality of attitude, in short, that we can put our finger on."

"Why do you want to put your finger on it?"

"Oh, just for the sake of putting, I suppose. Some of us are so constituted that we must be chasing quicksilver and pinning vapor down."

"Not to mention labeling other peoples' bottles and making mosaics out of second-hand blocks", sparred my companion, with a quiet chuckle. "Well, it's a harmless pastime. And I'm far from averse to getting a perspective on my dramatic objectification of myself, constituting as it does my life work and my excuse for living. In a way the sight will be a novelty to me, particularly through this binocular process of viewing it with your eyes and my own. Hence my offer of assistance."

"Many thanks. And do I understand that first of all you wish to be viewed as an artist?"

"Certainly. Why not?"

"No reason why not; only you know you have been generally regarded as a radical propagandist. Been elected one, in fact, by a majority vote."

"Which proves the precise opposite, since the majority is always wrong. And of course the compact herd would pay no attention to my own reiterated testimony."

"I know you wrote to Björnson that the highest attainment possible to a human being is self-realization; a task that most of us bungle. And you implied that adequate expression in whatever guise is at once the means of this realization and the proof of its accomplishment."

"Exactly. By your works you shall know yourselves. Another thing I reminded Brandes of was that there was no way in which he could benefit society more than by coining the metal he had in himself. I told Hansen that everything I had created as a poet had its origin in a frame of mind and a situation in life; that I never wrote because, as they say, I had a good subject. An enterprising authoress once sent me a sequel called *Brand's Daughters*, which I reciprocated with the advice that she lacked the authentic experience without which one does not create but merely writes books."

"Ah, but did you not also once say of your *Brand* that when writing it you felt the exaltation of a Crusader?"

"With the emphasis on exaltation. The real propellant and reward of all crusading."

"As in most of our performances, the subjective impulse masquerading as an objective design?"

"Just so. All my plays were the esthetic result of an inner experience, but *Brand* was a katharsis whose working out and crystallizing made me indescribably happy."

"Happy? Is that a word to use in connection with so depressing a production, either for the mood of the maker or for itself when made?"

"The sadness of a thing has nothing to do with the satisfaction involved in it. In fact, it's just as likely to be the other way around. In my own groping youth I had a burning prayerful desire for a great sorrow which might round out my existence and give life more meaning. Later I fought my way out of that phase, helped by considerable granting of my wish; but increased knowledge of life taught me that my naive yearning was not altogether absurd. Happiness is the word to use in capturing the meaning of life as well as the aim of those living it. So far as grief and



pain are means to that end, by instructing us as to the definition of joy and the terms on which it may be secured, and by furnishing the significant contrast and effective foil, so far are they beneficial and therefore tolerable."

"You talk like a hedonist."

"Why, to be sure. I am one."

"With your many, and sometimes unmitigated, tragedies, and your few, and sometimes tragic, comedies?"

"And so is everybody else," continued my philosopher, calmly ignoring my irrelevant remark. "The two races of men are not hedonists and others, but the avowed and the camouflaged. The latter are only an illusion-beset clan who fancy that joy by any other name would have a more sanctified sound and a loftier look. And my own frank and constant preoccupation with the vital problem of human happiness is revealed in all my works, in their overtones and implications as well as their explicit statements."

"I remember your Emperor Julian declared happiness to be the goal of all philosophy, and he defined happiness as harmony with one's self. But is it quite so simple as that?"

"Not quite. Bliss and misery are the poles of the spiritual world. Conflict is its axis. It is decreed for mortals that while there is life there is strife. First the internal struggle between hostile emotions, between ambition and ability, between laziness and the lust for power. Next the external battle with our thwarting, encroaching, demanding fellow men. Finally the warfare against a grudging, perverse, tyrannic force called Destiny. Happiness is the triumphant outcome all along the line, victory everywhere for the forces of eudemonism. Discord is a confession of failure, and defeat brings torment and agony. Yet there is exhilaration in the combat itself, there is dignity in a gallantly taken loss, there is peace in yielding graciously to the inevitable. Some aspect or variation of this basic theme appears in every play of mine, and if you are harkening for the leitmotif of my dramatic symphony, there it is."

"My memory is listening, and it does hear that recurrent note. Your memorable men and women have no use for life as a treadmill or a merry-go-round, and welcome it only as a battle-ground whose prize is their own happiness. 'A vale of tears, indeed,' echoes Oswald's mother scornfully, 'and we take good care to

make it one.' This lady, by the way, lived to regret having done her 'duty' to her husband; Nora Helmer repudiated hers somewhat earlier; Dina Dorf refused to be trapped by it; Svanhild and Boletta ridiculed the idea of wifely abnegation; the sons of Lady Kirsten Liljekrans and Gunhild Borkman, the daughter of Lady Inger, were wise enough to rebel against their domineering mothers; on the other hand, Aline Solness was a disagreeable martyr to her duty, and Agnes was a pathetic victim to the fanatic Brand. The slogan would seem to be, 'When joy and duty clash, let duty go to smash.'"

"Don't be hasty, my friend. 'Each mortal seeks his goal in his own way.' You are forgetting the devoted Aurelia and her kind, who found it by the path of service and sacrifice. Dagny and Margrete and Ingebord and Martha and Gina and Ella."

"Yes, and even Lona and Thea," I added. "A notable sisterhood indeed. Evidently no brothers are applying for membership."

"Preference for this vicarious type of felicity does seem on the whole to be a feminine trait. There's no discount, either, on the finding-your-life-by-losing-it formula. These women fared better than those restless souls who, unable to carve out careers of their own, sought a reflected glory by 'exercising influence;' each prodding some man to an achievement she might plume herself on as its fount and inspiration."

"You refer to Furia and Hiördis and Rebecca and Hedda."

"And little Hilda, who alone escapes being caught in her own net. But for successful self-immolation or even plain ordinary devotion, men have no gift. A Sigurd will forego his love for his friend, and his Quixotic renunciation brings sorrow and dole to all concerned. A Rosmer's idea of expiation is positively insane. The more a Tesman adores the more absurd he becomes. Dr. Wangel (and this may account for his daughter Hilda) is the only one I've found who can be a perfect gentleman and reap the reward. But then doctors have an extra amount of sense, anyway."

"Yours have, at any rate. Whenever you need a character of insight and sagacity, with the wit to diagnose and the wisdom to prescribe, you conjure up your Fieldbos and Stockmanns and Rellings and Ranks. And conversely, when your program calls for an egregious ass or a wily old sinner, you whistle for the Rever-

end Strawman or Pastor Manders or Bishop Nicholas, not to mention the evangelist Brand. To represent learning you summon Rectors Rörlund and Kroll, and George Tesman, PH.D. Is all this intentional, may I ask?"

"I suspect in those last, it's my Subconscious rising up and sticking out its tongue."

"And when it wants to make faces, there is always a politician or public official handy?"

"Does seem so. I must credit the aspiring and eloquent Stensgard with generating more mirth in me than did any of my characters. There was milder merriment in certain complacent citizens and pompous householders."

"But evidently only a grim pleasure in unmasking such schemers and plotters as the fathers of young Dina and Regina and Hedvig; and the exploiters of old Ekdal and Brovik and Foldal."

"You're not so far wrong. But it's not the hypocrites that draw satiric fire so much as the sentimentalists. At least it takes intelligence to deceive other people, but it argues a plentiful lack of it to go around deluding yourself."

"And yet you appear more bent on exposing the knaves than the fools."

"Naturally. You cannot bear to see the clever scamps getting away with it, and so you trip them up. But the same fall that would only scatter their booty would maim for life the poor imbeciles who could swagger blithely on so long as they're not molested."

"Therefore you let them cherish their illusions, the while you make game of them behind their backs for doing it?"

"Why not? Humor is its own reward, but if it must have a mission, it can point the mocking finger at the object-lesson and say, *de te, fabula!* to the profit of all beholders, and the victim none the wiser."

"Since being wiser would do him no good, but only hurt and bewilder him. An illusory contentment, then, is better than an illumined grief?"

"For the weak-eyed and wobbly-kneed, certainly. That is why the Ekdal disillusionment was a calamity and the Helmer enlightenment a benefit. Mrs. Linden was right in advising a clear understanding in the Doll's House, because its gay little lark, always so

merry but never happy, proved to have enough of the eagle in her to weather the storm and rise above it. Gregers Werle was wrong in forcing the same recipe on the lame duck Hjalmar, the clucking busy hen Gina, and the wistful timid dove Hedvig, because none of them could stand it. Both these stories are too sad for satire, as are indeed all our human sagas. Yet we cannot but smile at the eternal discrepancy between what we are and what we fancy we are. And in that very smile lies our salvation. This happiness we all crave so intensely and win so rarely has indeed no fixed formula but it does have a few constant factors, and one of them is a sense of humor."

"It is that, I take it, which makes your Peer Gynt immune to satire, in spite of his flightiness and folly. Whether a young man chopping a tree or an old man peeling an onion, he is always on to himself."

"Yes, and so is Bishop Nicholas, the unconscionable old villain, haggling his way out of purgatory, hatching perpetual mischief with his last breath, trying to cheat the devil, the Lord, and his fellow-men. But both these precious rascals are beyond our ridicule and rebuke because they supply their own. It is the sculptor Rubek who has to be. And what his symbolic figure of Remorse really is,—a cheap and convenient substitute for the compunction that should have been a living thing in his own heart. And when Duke Skule seeks comfort from the Skald, he gets a pungent tonic instead of a soothing draught. 'I need some one by me', he urges, 'who sinks his own will utterly in mine—who believes in me unflinchingly, and who will cling close to me in good hap and ill, who lives only to shed light and warmth over my life, and must die if I fall. Give me counsel, Jatgeir'. 'Buy yourself a dog, my lord,' says the shrewd minstrel."

"Good enough. Yet Skule hardly needed a dog, having already the dog-like devotion of two women, one of whom gave him a sweet and loyal daughter, and the other a hero-worshipping son. His was the cry of the parasitic egoist, but the too independent egoist whose pride takes the form of exclusive isolation is in as sad a way. Little is done in this world without the stimulus and support of comradeship."

"That's no news to me. I never could be a jolly good fellow, for the ingredients of joyous gusto and bubbling effervescence

were left out of my composition. But I know well that happiness is not only an end in itself but the means also to the best creative work; and that happiness is in turn more largely based on a genius for human relationships than any other one thing. One of my most vivid memories is of a walking trip I once took with a congenial friend. I felt that he found me hedged about with a sort of repellant coldness that made any close approach difficult, and yet in truth I was finding myself drawn to him especially, because of his youthful soul, his joy in life, his chivalrous way of looking at things, all of which did me good. I implored him to preserve all that, for, believe me, it is not agreeable to see the world from an October standpoint. It sometimes seemed to me that I was separated from both God and man by an infinite void, and that fearful realization was the animating spirit of much of my art. Do you recall Borgheim's plea to Asta? What he most looks forward to is her sharing in his success and delight. 'Not the weariness and difficulty?' she asks. 'Pooh!' he retorts. 'One can always get over that sort of thing alone, but it takes two to be glad. Otherwise there is no happiness in being glad'. That young engineer was one of my wisest characters."

"Yet this very Asta was in love with another man, and he unhappily married to another woman. Indeed in all your two dozen plays there are scarcely two happy marriages or unbroken friendships. You are a very pessimistic hedonist, it seems."

"Inevitable for one who is also a realist. But if my observations have caused me in discouraged moments to see the whole history of the world as one great shipwreck, in which the only important thing was to save one's self, they also have incited me to meditate on how that small salvage might be accomplished. It is just as Ellida said to Arnholm: the bright and cheerful way in which people take life is like the joy in our northern long light summer days,—it has in it the foreboding of the darkness to come."

"Yes, but those long dark winter nights hold the promise of the coming of sunshine and warmth and color. And meantime there are feastings and merriment by sheltered hearth-fires."

"Oh, of course. That's the salvage. We snatch our compensations and cherish our hopes, while the throbbing pulse of the universe beats steadily on, not caring whether or not we be in tune."



"You yourself have offered us more compensation than hope, and little enough of either."

"All that the situation warranted, from my view of it. But each individual's angle is small, and he looks through his own temperamental spectacles. Mine were focussed mainly on the truth, and my lens may have been a trifle smoky. Still I saw much that was delightfully humorous, and occasionally a bit of loveliness or grandeur."

"Your discernment was sharp and penetrating, your wit was genial or corrosive appropriate to the circumstances, your highlights of charm exquisitely placed, and your report on it all was made with superb craftsmanship and unerring taste. It is, however, perhaps a little inconsistent that one who ranked himself as artist should have so prevailingly the scientist's care for verity and disregard of beauty. Only in *The Vikings at Helgeland* do we glimpse the majestic and sublime, both in nature and humanity, and only in *The Lady from the Sea* do we find a certain grace and serenity."

"Even that much is a fair proportion for life as it is lived. As a poet I trust I was not devoid of a sense of esthetic values, but as a dramatist I felt impelled to stalk human existence and bag it alive, catch it offguard and unconscious, give you ordinary men, women, and children, in their average homes, going about their mundane affairs. More sordid than glorious, on the whole."

"Yes, I know. You whisk back the curtains on a world of Bernicks before the ladies have time to take husband's hint and primp up a bit. And this premature exposure discloses a frantic mother out hunting an angry truant child, a ward bent on a defiant elopement, a wronged brother-in-law threatening revenge, a sister giving aid and comfort to the enemy, worried employees issuing dire warnings, business partners in a jealous and suspicious mood, and not a thing neat and snug and harmonious."

"Quite the contrary. Everything taut and tense and complicated. For the ceaseless and endless conflict is on, each one doing battle, in his active or passive fashion, for his own satisfactions. Yes, Lona, 'men break many very dear ties to win their happiness.' They break other things, too, and they build as well as destroy. Forfeiting, blundering, risking all, paying all, for the barest chance of a fractional fleeting immeasurably precious joy."

"Well, I really shouldn't have thought it of you, but your case is too well documented to admit of dispute. Besides, it's no time to dispute when the gray dawn is breaking. And I am too grateful to you for dropping in and helping me out with your kind co-operation."

"You are not quite so hazy now about what you are going to write?"

"At least I can put more of you and less of myself into it, even if I say no more than that we are still delighted to honor this hedonistic pessimistic satiric realistic artistic dramatist, that we have not yet improved upon his sanity and verve, that skilled actors and appreciative audiences keep him from being crowded off the stage, and we are glad Lady Fortune changed her mind about making a pharmacist or a physician out of one she had so unquestionably designed to be a playwright. And I shall tell them how you voluntarily furnished the candles for your own birthday cake."

I paused for a reply. The voice had vanished. I looked around again. The portrait gazed back as reserved and demure and settled in its frame as if it never had dreamed of being out all night.

FRANCES THERESA RUSSELL.

Stanford University, California.

### EVENING

Come once again,—only this once, I pray.  
I will be gentle; I will understand.  
You need not touch my lips nor yet my hand.  
You need not look at me in the old way.  
Yet come once more, once more, and we will say  
Our last farewell. It shall be as you planned.  
I will not strive to hold you, or demand  
The slightest boon, not even one pale ray

To cheer the hopeless years that are to be.  
Do you not see them, stretching through the dim  
Twilight, all colorless, all formless? We  
Have one brief hour of day, a sunset rim  
Of gold, one shining peak for you and me.  
Come, take this cup and fill it to the brim.

ALICE FREDA BRAUNLICH.

## THE GALAXY: AN IMPORTANT AMERICAN MAGAZINE

*The Galaxy* was born of "a divine discontent with *The Atlantic Monthly*" and the "feeling that New York ought to have a monthly of its own". Such, at least, was *The Nation's* statement. From Philadelphia, Rebecca Harding Davis wrote to the editors: "Both Mr. Davis and I have been interested in *The Galaxy* from the first issue, hoping to find in it that which would fill a vacuum in our literature more apparent every year—a national magazine in which the current of thought in every section could find expression as thoroughly as that of New England does in *The Atlantic*."<sup>1</sup> And from the same city came the enthusiastic good wishes of George H. Boker, the poet and playwright: "I am glad to know that something without the imprint of Boston upon it is likely to establish itself with our people." From John Esten Cooke in Virginia came good wishes and promises of reinforcements: *Harper's*, he believed, was "sectional and dull", and *The Atlantic*, "a New England coterie affair altogether".

Its two editors whom Edmund Clarence Stedman was justified in thinking so brave were William Conant Church and Francis Pharcellus Church, founder and editor until its merger with the New York *Examiner* of a New York Baptist paper called *The Chronicle*. The two boys had been trained in journalistic ways and means in the *Chronicle* office, and in the year of its merger had started a periodical of their own—*The Army and Navy Journal*, which is still flourishing. At the end of the war, in which William Conant had seen varied service, the two brothers saw the *Journal* an assured success and were ready for further journalistic adventure. The old *Knickerbocker* had just exhaled its last feeble breath, but the era was one of periodical

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<sup>1</sup> MS. letter to F. P. Church, dated June 4, 1866, in possession of Mr. Willard Church, of Montclair, N. J. Many of the letters quoted hereafter in this article are from Mr. Church's collection.

expansion, and the Churches decided to capitalize the very apparent sentiment in favor of a New York literary magazine by starting one of their own. *The Galaxy* was the result.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, who had named *The Atlantic Monthly*, may have named the new magazine. The name "Metropolitan" was first proposed, but six weeks before the first number of the magazine appeared Howells wrote the editors, "The other night Dr. Holmes told me that he was engaged in the great work of trying to give a name to the new magazine. Is it christened yet?" Soon thereafter the new name was announced. Odd though it seems for these anti-Bostonians to go to the Back Bay for a godfather, is it not true that "Galaxy" has a very Holmesy sound? One thinks of Holmes's own "Star-Drift" in *The Poet at the Breakfast Table*, and of the doctor's love for correlating the phenomena of natural science with literature.

Stedman later told Lowell that he had had the refusal of the editorship of *The Galaxy*, but when the magazine appeared the Church brothers were both publishers and editors. And editors they remained throughout *The Galaxy's* history, though Sheldon and Company became publishers and joint proprietors at the end of the magazine's second year. Associated with them were Frederick Beecher Perkins as office editor and Richard Grant White as an editorial contributor. Perkins was a famous librarian and an experienced editor, a cousin of Henry Ward Beecher. Theodore Tilton called him "a born magazine writer". The length of Perkins's *Galaxy* service is not known, but White was a fairly regular writer of special articles and editorial notes throughout the magazine's career. As departments came to be added later, other writers were called upon. George E. Pond, who had been associate editor of *The Army and Navy Journal*, wrote an editorial department (chiefly political) called "Drift-Wood" under the name "Philip Quilibet" during the last ten years of *The Galaxy*, being engaged meanwhile as editorial writer first on *The New York Times* and then on *The Philadelphia Record*. S. S. Conant, who was editor of *Harper's Weekly* for fifteen years prior to his mysterious disappearance

in 1885, contributed criticism to the fine arts department. James F. Meline, who contributed reviews of French and German books until his death in 1873, presented the paradox of an ardent Catholic writing for a magazine unfriendly to his faith. Professor E. L. Youmans, the famous popularizer of scientific knowledge, edited the "Scientific Miscellany" from 1871 to June, 1874. He was a most enthusiastic follower of Herbert Spencer, and because of a breakdown of plans to publish Spencer's *Sociology* serially in *The Galaxy*, he founded *The Popular Science Monthly* chiefly in order to make his author known in America. He was followed in the scientific department by John A. Church, a brother of the editors of *The Galaxy*, who had been a professor of mineralogy in the Columbia School of Mines, and editor of the *Engineering and Mining Journal*.

One of the most interesting figures connected editorially with *The Galaxy* was the almost forgotten "Carl Benson". In private life he was Charles Astor Bristed, and so he was known in the social centers of Europe and America. His father was an English emigrant who had been successively lawyer, editor, and clergyman; his mother was a daughter of John Jacob Astor. "Carl Benson" was always a brilliant writer—daring, cultivated, inclined to be cynical, decided. There was rather more of Europe about him than of America; one never forgets the honors he won at Trinity College, Cambridge; and his countrymen sometimes resented the freedom of his criticism of them. Bristed was always a tonic writer, and his "Casual Cogitations" and other writings in *The Galaxy* were a decided asset to that magazine.

But the best known *Galaxy* editor of them all was Mark Twain, who conducted a department called "Memoranda" from May, 1870, to April, 1871.<sup>3</sup> Mark Twain had just acquired incontestable fame by his *Innocents Abroad*; he had married and settled down at Buffalo in a house which, as he boyishly writes Colonel Church, "a generous father-in-law has built and furnished at the comely figure of \$42,000"; and he bought an interest in

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<sup>3</sup> Inclusive; omitting, however, the installment for March, 1871, and cutting the August, 1870, allotment to two pages.



*The Buffalo Express*, which, he says, "pays me an ample livelihood, and does it without my having to go near it. I write sketches for it, and occasional squibs and editorials—that is all. I don't go to the office."<sup>3</sup> He was thus in a position to demand liberal compensation for his magazine work, and he writes, "If I can have entire ownership and disposal of what I write for *The Galaxy*, after it has appeared in the magazine, I will edit your humorous department for two thousand (\$2,000) a year<sup>4</sup>—and I give you my word that I can start out tomorrow or any day that I choose and make that money in two weeks, lecturing." This amounted to some seventeen dollars a page, or nearly double the *Galaxy's* highest rate of payment to its other contributors of prose; but it was a good investment, for it brought the magazine the largest circulation it ever attained.

In his salutatory Mark Twain outlined his program:

. . . In this department of mine the public may always rely upon finding exhaustive statistical tables concerning the finances of the country, the ratio of births and deaths, the percentage of increase of population, etc., etc.,—in a word, everything in the realm of statistics that can make existence bright and beautiful. Also in my department may be found elaborate condensations of the Patent Office Reports. . . .

And finally, I call attention with pride to the fact that in my department of the magazine the farmer will always find full market reports, and also complete instructions about farming, even from the grafting of the seed to the harrowing of the matured crop. I shall throw a pathos into the subject of Agriculture that will surprise and delight the world.

But however lightly the new editor might treat the subject of agriculture, he showed more than once in the "Memoranda" that vein of savage satire which is so important a phase of the true

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Colonel Church, dated Feb. 9 [1870].

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Albert Bigelow Paine, in his great biography of Mark Twain, puts the contract figure at \$3,400 (page 403), but this letter dated March 11th [1870], together with an autograph acknowledgement of "\$334, full payment for July & Sept." dated Sept. 5 [1870] shows that \$2,000 was the figure.

Mark Twain. In the very first installment he attacks the Rev. Mr. Talmadge for certain reported remarks tending to bar working-men from his congregation on account of their odor. His indignation was also aroused against the persecution of Chinese in America, and, on the other hand, against idealization of the Indian. His most bitter attack was upon the Rev. Mr. Sabine, who had aroused newspaper wrath by refusing to bury the actor George Holland from his church, but had remarked that there was "a little church around the corner" where the funeral might be held—from which the Church of the Transfiguration has come to be called by the name given it in derogation. Clemens's attack on Sabine was in part an earnest defense of the theatre, and in part a severe indictment of the hypocritical religionists. He ended by calling the reverend gentleman in question a "crawling, slimy, sanctimonious, self-righteous reptile!"—a kind of writing which he had learned on western newspapers.

The "Memoranda" for April, 1871, contained his "Valedictory":

I have now written for *The Galaxy* a year. For the last eight months, with hardly an interval, I have had for my fellows and comrades night and day, doctors and watchers of the sick! During these eight months death has taken two members of my home circle and malignantly threatened two others. All this I have experienced, yet all the time been under contract to furnish "humorous" matter once a month for this magazine. . . . I think that some of the "humor" I have written during this period could have been injected into a funeral sermon without disturbing the the solemnity of the occasion.

It should have been plain enough from the beginning that Clemens would do well to last the year out. Ten small-type, double-column pages a month required too much of a grind. When the year was only half gone, he wrote Colonel Church: "Sometimes I get ready to give you notice that I'll quit at the end of my year because the *Galaxy* work crowds book work so much, but I am very fond of the Memoranda, and take a live interest in it always." In the end, he was very glad to be free of it, and he wrote to his brother Orion that he had informed

*The Galaxy* that he would not furnish another installment for less than five hundred dollars, and preferred not to do it at all. This was three times what he had been getting, and prohibitive. He parted from *The Galaxy* on good terms with its editors, however.

For a few months after Mark Twain's departure Donn Piatt edited *The Galaxy's* humorous department, now called "The Club Room", and then the editors themselves tried to run it. Indeed they did run it; but the effect, as *The Nation* observed, was rather "doleful" than merry. In July, 1872, Kate Sanborn took charge of it and conducted it for a little more than a year, after which it was discontinued. Under Miss Sanborn it was an amusing, literary, scrap-bookish essay of four pages in each number.

Passing now from editors to contributors, we find that of the four chief contributors to the magazine's pages during its nearly twelve years of existence, two sustained some editorial connection with it. These four outstanding writers, because of the quantity as well as the importance of their contributions, were Richard Grant White, Justin McCarthy, Henry James, and Eugene Benson.

White probably wrote more of the "Nebulæ"—the chief editorial department of the magazine—than any other writer, and was frequently referred to as *The Galaxy's* editor. He was never that, however; on the contrary, he occasionally found reason to complain of the way his copy was edited, and once went so far as to resign on account of dissatisfaction with the way his work was handled. Grant White was a man of wide interests, and acute mind, and considerable scholarship. His signed articles were related generally to what may be termed the state of civilization in America, and especially in New York. He "really writes as much on cultivation", says *The Nation* acutely, "as though he were not in full possession of it." His topics were Shakespeare, the stage, journalism, music, language, and manners; and the last-named topic managed to insinuate itself into most of the articles on the other six. Most notable was his series on "Words and Their Uses", and the controversy

with Fitzedward Hall which grew out of it. Fitzedward Hall was perhaps a less accomplished man than Grant White, but a greater philologist. Readers of *The Galaxy*, unless they also read Hall in *The Nation*, could scarcely know that Hall pretty thoroughly demolished White; White certainly pummelled Hall with vigor—"Punishing a Pundit" he called it. But Grant White is not to be dismissed with a sneer. His editing of Shakespeare, his early exposure of the Collier forgeries of Shakespearean emendations, and his acute literary, musical, and dramatic criticisms deserve high consideration. Positive, fearless, cultivated, versatile, he was a valuable aid to *The Galaxy*. He contributed to nearly half the numbers of the magazine, and was a prominent writer of articles on philology, music, and the drama for *The Atlantic* and other periodicals.

Justin McCarthy, the Irish journalist and politician, made such close and such lasting connections with American journalism during his visit to this country from 1868 to 1870 that he is occasionally claimed as an American writer—and this in spite of the fact that he was a member of the English Parliament for twenty-two years. In America he was the interpreter of England, and the self-conscious culture of the America of the 'seventies demanded to know much about England. McCarthy was a minister plenipotentiary and journalist, and during a visit which stretched from a few months to three years became editorial contributor of informative articles and comment on the staffs of *The New York Times* and *The Independent* as well as *The Galaxy*. Besides this he contributed short stories and serial novels with miraculous fecundity to *The Galaxy*, *Harper's*, and other periodicals. Said *The Nation* in June, 1873: "Mr. McCarthy continues to write with more fluency on more topics of a certain kind with more safeness of assertion and reasoning than any other magazine writer of his calibre. In a way he is a wonder." His *Galaxy* articles dealt mainly with English political and literary personages with whom he was more or less acquainted personally, though he occasionally considered French or Italian politicians. *The Galaxy* published four serials by this brilliant writer, of which *Lady Judith* was the best known.

He was represented almost constantly in its pages from 1869 onward.

Henry James, Jr., as he then signed himself, had contributed two short stories to *The Atlantic* and many unsigned reviews to *The North American* before *The Galaxy* was begun. But the new magazine gave the young James an audience outside the Boston circle, and though it printed an average of only about a story a year, kept him somewhat before the *Galaxy* audience. In 1872 it began to print James's articles of travel and criticism, and for more than a year before its merger with *The Atlantic* it had been printing a James article nearly every month. *The American* and *The Europeans* had both been in the hands of *The Galaxy*, it appears, for serial publication, but the former was turned over to *The Atlantic* because William Black's *Madcap Violet* had crowded it out, and the latter was disposed of in the same way after the merger.<sup>5</sup> "The Sweetheart of M. Briseux", "Mme. de Mauves", "The Story of a Masterpiece", and "A Light Man" are probably the most important of the James stories published in *The Galaxy*, while some of the chapters in *French Poets and Novelists* and *Trans-Atlantic Sketches* first appeared in our magazine.

Then there was Eugene Benson, a painter, a critic, and, as he would have said, a *frondeur*, who spent most of his life abroad. His contributions to *The Galaxy* and *The Atlantic* were episodic in his career rather than integral, but (perhaps for that reason) they have a freshness, a vividness, a spirit of gallant tilting at conventions which did much to confirm the reputation of *The Galaxy* for unconventionality. Benson was one of the earliest leaders of the revolt against American Puritanism: an admirer of French manners, he hated the "preachy-teachy-prosy motive"

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<sup>5</sup> Howells requested manuscript of "the James novel" in 1876, and the letter is endorsed "MS. sent". *The American* began in *The Atlantic* in June, 1876, before the story was all written, according to James. (See preface vol. 11, page v, New York ed. *Works*.) An obituary article on William Conant Church in *The Army and Navy Journal*, May 28, 1917, says *The American* was transferred to *The Atlantic* at the time of the merger. This was probably *The Europeans*, which began in *The Atlantic* in July, 1878.



in American life, and had a love for what was exquisite, though fleshly. His first article in *The Galaxy*, "The Pagan Element in French Art", branded him as a pagan in American letters. Even the *Galaxy* editors were rather frightened at their own temerity in printing his second article, and openly criticized it in the next number for its "attack on reserve and decency". Yet they continued to publish Benson's work very frequently during their first three years, but nothing from his pen appeared in *The Galaxy* after November, 1869.

The writer who outruns all other contributors except McCarthy and White in the number of pages printed in *The Galaxy* is Mrs. Annie Edwards. Six serial stories from her pen were printed in the magazine, and her contributions, averaged among the 153 numbers of the entire file, would make some ten pages for each issue. These serials were published contemporaneously in English magazines, and printed in *The Galaxy* from advance sheets. Mrs. Edwards was a third-rate English novelist who sometimes rose to second-rate power in her handling of emotional interest. She was much praised for her ability in characterization,<sup>6</sup> but her characters, though vivid and memorable, are too much in black and white: they must either be villains or heroes. She deals with English and continental society; she is fond of an international group.

*The Galaxy* was never without a serial story, and sometimes it had two or three going at full blast. About two thirds of them were by English novelists greatly superior to American, because the *Galaxy* editors knew that advance sheets of English novels were, sometimes at least, cheaper than original American manuscripts. The magazine's position as to comparative

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<sup>6</sup> H. T. Tuckerman, who was no mean critic, wrote of her in *The Boston Transcript* (quoted in the *Galaxy* prospectus for 1870): "She can de inate man or woman after nature—without caricature; hence the reality of her impersonations and the vital interest of her stories." And Eugene Benson wrote, in a *Galaxy* review, vol. v, p. 789, June, 1868): "For vivid delineation Mrs. Edwards is in the first rank of novelists and without a superior among contemporaries." This judgment *The Nation* branded as "sad nonsense." (vi, p. 435, May 28, 1868).

quality of the English and American novel is set forth in an editorial evidently written by Grant White: "Our public has no notion whatever of the poor quality of almost all the writing in this department submitted to American publishers and editors." White is inclined to agree with the Jamesian dictum that American society does not furnish fit material for novels, "the American novelist is required to make bricks without straw and create something out of nothing." As to the matter of relative cost, Mrs. Edwards received less than two dollars a page for advance sheets of her stories<sup>7</sup> and Trollope probably little more,<sup>8</sup> while for J. W. DeForest's *Overland*, *The Galaxy* paid over five dollars a page, and no doubt quite as much for Rebecca Harding Davis's *Waiting for the Verdict*.

Trollope's *The Claverings*, *The Eustace Diamonds*, and *An Editor's Tales*, William Black's *Madcap Violet*, Reade's *Put Yourself in His Place*, and the serials of McCarthy and Mrs. Edwards were the English contributions. Mrs. Davis's serial was the first American novel to appear, and it was followed by "Marion Harland's" *Beechdale* and Jane G. Austin's *Cipher*. Colonel DeForest's love and adventure story of the Far West, *Overland*, attracted wide attention by a refreshing tendency toward the realistic—a tendency also to be seen in Mrs. Davis's work. DeForest's *Miss Ravenel's Conversion* had given him a measure of fame, and his *Kate Beaumont* was running in *The*

<sup>7</sup> MS. letter in possession of Mr. Willard Church, showing that her price was one hundred pounds for each serial. They usually ran to 250 or 300 pages.

<sup>8</sup> See Trollope's *Autobiography* (Oxford ed.) page 281, where he doubts whether his publishers, who had the disposal of his advance sheets, received for them five per cent of the price paid him for his novels. The highest price ever paid him for a novel was paid for *The Claverings*—2800 pounds. McCarthy, however, got a much higher rate, and I have no data upon the price paid for Reade's *Put Yourself in His Place*. The editor of the *Galaxy* stated in March, 1870 (lx, 416) that "the advanced sheets of the *best* foreign novels, *as a rule*, command a higher price from American publishers than the original manuscripts of American novelists." The italics are mine. At least the *Galaxy* paid less for its many Edwards serials than for most of its American serials. But the statement quoted should be given due weight in considering the general question of English serials in American magazines.

*Atlantic* while *Overland* was appearing in *The Galaxy*. *The Galaxy* followed *Overland* with *The Wetherell Affair*, and continued to publish short stories by DeForest for several years. One other serial must be mentioned—H. H. Boyesen's delightful *A Norseman's Pilgrimage*, which supported pleasantly *The Galaxy's* ambition to print the fresh and different.

In the field of the short story *The Galaxy* seems to have had no very fixed policy. It found its short stories where and when it could, sometimes printing one in a number, sometimes three or four. Aside from James, McCarthy, and DeForest, its short story writers were chiefly women. Rose Terry Cooke contributed to the realistic movement in short fiction in some of her *Galaxy* contributions, as, for example, "Too Late", published in January, 1875. Rebecca Harding Davis and Constance Fenimore Woolson were upon somewhat the same path, and a number of Turgenev translations were published in the 'seventies. Caroline Cheseboro, whose stories are now neglected by reader and critic alike, but who published largely in the very best American magazines for the twenty-five years before her death in 1873, is well represented in *The Galaxy*; as were the brilliant but less important writers, Louise Chandler Moulton and Harriett Prescott Spofford. Though realism had its innings in *The Galaxy*, melodrama, with its handmaiden sentimentality, scored the more heavily. Maria Louise Pool, Jane G. Austin, and a score or two of unknowns postured through many pages. But *The Galaxy*, in printing such stories, was only doing what many other periodicals—*Harper's*, for example, and the women's magazines—were doing to a much greater extent.

*The Galaxy*, though it may be searched in vain for masterpieces in poetry, and though it printed a great deal that might better have been left unprinted, nevertheless published much that is entirely worthy a first-class magazine. Much to the disgust of *The Nation*, four Whitman poems were printed. "We suppose this sort of thing will have to go on for a while, and we shall have to bear it patiently", said J. R. Dennett in that periodical anent "A Carol of Harvest, for 1867". Other reviewers were not so "patient". *The Printers' Circular*, which briefly and often

naïvely reviewed the magazines month by month, spoke the common mind when it said with sarcasm that "Brother of All, with Generous Hand", in the January, 1870, *Galaxy*, consisted of "stupendous lines, which not being prose, and probably not sense, are therefore to be honored as poetry". Whitman's famous essay on "Democracy" was printed in *The Galaxy* for December, 1867. A few poems by Sidney Lanier were published in 1877, including the charming sonnet, "The Mocking Bird", and Paul Hamilton Hayne was represented frequently. Edmund Clarence Stedman and Bayard Taylor occasionally contributed verse, especially in the early years of the magazine. The popular and rather sentimental lyrics of the Cary sisters, "H. H.", William Winter, and the Platts were printed with more or less regularity. Certain writers remembered by a single poem made less fortunate contributions to *The Galaxy*: Nora Perry, of "After the Ball"; Elizabeth Akers, of "Rock Me to Sleep, Mother"; Thomas Buchanan Reed, of "Sheridan's Ride". Some forgotten poets of ability and a vanished popularity contributed often to *The Galaxy*—among them Edgar Fawcett, "Howard Glyndon" (Anna E. P. Searing), Robert Weeks, Julia C. R. Dorr, and Alfred B. Street. Edward Rowland Sill contributed a number of poems, including "A Tropical Morning at Sea", which *The Nation* disapproved. Bret Harte and Joaquin Miller were slightly represented, and Emma Lazarus contributed three lyrics in 1877. The humor-poets, John G. Saxe and C. D. Shanly, appeared in the latter numbers. William Cullen Bryant was represented by a passage from his translation of the *Iliad*, but the distinctively New England poets were conspicuous by their absence.

To analyze the special articles that appeared in *The Galaxy* from 1866 to 1878 would be to analyze the life and thought of the Post-War Period. This magazine touched popular life at more points and more directly than most other high-class magazines have. "*The Galaxy* has swung quite clear of the old traditions of our literary pharasaism", remarked *The Independent*. "Without any affectation of originality, it pays little attention to established methods; its topics are fresh, its illustrations



salient, its discussions sometimes tinged with the petulance of youth, but usually spiced with the aroma of vital juices." The sentence is unmistakably Theodore Tilton's; the judgment is sounder than the prose. The editorial goes on to speak of "the almost rustic simplicity with which it expresses earnest conviction in bold words"; yet a study of *The Galaxy's* editorial policy as shown in the magazine itself (especially in the "Nebulæ"), and of the correspondence between editors and contributors indicates a marked caution which always kept *The Galaxy* from being really extremist.

Next to fiction, criticism occupied the largest space in *The Galaxy*. Its literary criticism was, and still is, important. Its department of "Current Literature" was hampered little, if at all, by the incubus of publishers who were also in the book business, for Sheldon & Co. issued but few books, and *Galaxy* reviewers were quite as frequently severe in dealing with Sheldon books as with any other. "A strong point about *The Galaxy*," observes *The Nation*, "is its independence of all publishers, including its own."<sup>9</sup> It continues, then, to say, in estimating *The Galaxy's* book-reviewing: "Its reviews are perhaps not so able as they appear to be honest, . . . but it certainly is intelligent in its reviews of its rivals." Which sums the matter up very well.

The leading writers of literary criticism in *The Galaxy* were Richard Grant White, Edmund Clarence Stedman, Henry James, J. F. Meline, John Burroughs, and W. C. Brownell. Of these James and Meline wrote chiefly of foreign literature, and for a time the magazine printed special departments devoted to German, French, and Italian literature. James and White also wrote dramatic criticism, and Brander Matthews contributed, during the latter half of the magazine's life, some articles about the continental theatre. Olive Logan, too, had some very lively articles about the stage.

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<sup>9</sup>I have quoted *The Nation* frequently in this article, for its department of magazine reviewing, written by J. R. Dennett, which appeared from the founding of that periodical in 1865 through 1876, was singularly discriminating and wise.



History and biography bulked very large in *The Galaxy*, as they have done in most American magazines. In the post-war period this phenomenon was the more marked from two causes—the popularity of Civil War narratives, and the occurrence of the national centennial. The recollections of Generals Custer and James Grant Wilson appeared in *The Galaxy*, and the excellent narratives of James Franklin Fitts were a good feature. Custer's *Life on the Plains* was cut short in its serial course through the magazine by the death of the author at Little Bighorn. Political reminiscences by Thurlow Weed, Jeremiah S. Black, and Gideon Welles gave rise to much controversy. J. S. C. Abbott, who was writing copiously for *Harper's* at the same time, contributed some of his popular European history to *Galaxy* pages.

Quite as striking as the amount of space given to history is that to scientific articles. "The Taine of the twentieth century who shall study the literature of the nineteenth will note an epochal earmark. He will discover a universal drenching of belles letters with science and sociology, while the ultimate, dominant tinge in our era he will observe to be Darwinism." Thus wrote "Philip Quilibet" (George E. Pond) in *The Galaxy* for May, 1873. "Not only does all physical research take color from the new theory", he continued, "but the doctrine sends its pervasive hues through poetry, novels, history. A brisk reaction betrays its disturbing presence in theology. Journalism is dyed so deep with it that the favorite logic of the leading article is 'survival of the fittest', and the favorite jest is 'sexual selection'. In the last new book, in the next new book, you will detect it." In January, 1871, *The Galaxy* had introduced a new department devoted to science and edited successively by Professors John A. Church and E. L. Youmans. The announcement of the new department observed that the editors "are but simply yielding to that acknowledged tendency in the world of thought which is giving increasing interest and importance to scientific subjects. . . . Science has given a new reading of nature, has opened the higher questions of life and human relations, has furnished a new method to the mind, and

is fast becoming a new power in literature." Science in *The Galaxy* was not limited to the "Scientific Miscellany", but appeared in various special articles written by physicians and professors, and especially by that group of professional magaz-  
inists which developed during the post-war period.

Current politics, which *The Galaxy* began by avoiding, soon came to occupy a considerable place. Foreign politics bulk larger than the domestic variety—which is but one more indication of the extraordinary interest shown by all periodicals through much of the last century in foreign manners and customs. The amount of travel literature in all of them was very large. This fact is to be connected with the remarkable preoccupation with manners which is so noticeable in *The Galaxy*, *Appleton's Journal*, *The Round Table*, and many other periodicals of the times. Twenty-two pages per volume of the *Galaxy* file were devoted to the topics related closely to manners; but that is not a fair indication of the interest shown by the magazine in this subject, for a large proportion of the articles, and even of the fiction, show constant occupation with this theme. Richard Grant White set himself up as an *arbiter elegantiarum*. Journalism, literature, politics, sociology, feminism, all were viewed more or less from the angle of "the manners or want of manners peculiar to Americans". Eating, smoking cigarettes, chaperonage, swearing, drinking by women, shaving oneself, and hundreds of other such topics are treated at length. The "woman question" is a part of this general subject, and so also is the matter of language. An average of two or three pages to the volume on philological questions may surprise the reader until he learns of the importance ascribed, justly enough, to good language as a social convention.

Turning now from our survey of the file, let us inquire into the relations between editors and contributors. In the first place, the Messrs. Church belonged to the class of editors-tyrants. They were the absolute monarchs of their magazine, and they did not esteem the rights of contributors very highly. There is much to be said in support of their position, but this is not the place to say it: it is enough to observe that there are

many examples of authorial protest in the *Galaxy* correspondence files. And anonymity found little encouragement. Never so much used in America as in England, it was losing what hold it had, when *The Galaxy* came forward in 1866 renouncing it boldly, save for exceptional cases. As to rates of payment for contributions, *The Galaxy* had no fixed scale. Payment for prose ranges from ten dollars per 500-word page to three dollars per 750-word page, or from two cents to less than half a cent per word. *The Atlantic* was paying about ten dollars a 750-word page at the time to its more favored writers. For poetry, the rate seems to have varied from five to fifty dollars a poem. On the whole, *The Galaxy* treated its authors as well as or better than they were treated elsewhere.

In considering its rates to authors, we must remember that *The Galaxy* was not making a financial success. It struggled along with five or six thousand circulation for its first two years, made an unusual gain at the end of 1868, and came steadily up to 23,000, which it reached early in 1871, when Mark Twain's "Memoranda", Justin McCarthy's *Lady Judith*, Colonel DeForest's *Overland*, and Thurlow Weed's *Autobiography* were running simultaneously in the magazine. This was the high point in *Galaxy* circulation, which thereafter declined steadily but surely until it had reached seven thousand, when it was merged with *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1878. The subscription rate was four dollars yearly, and the advertising rate published in Rowell's *Directory* in 1875 was one hundred dollars a page. Advertising probably never contributed very largely to *The Galaxy's* receipts, however. Though it frequently carried as much as twenty-five pages of advertisements during the years 1868 to 1871, they were largely announcements of periodicals and books taken on an exchange basis. Magazine advertising was still in its long infancy; and, few though they were, *The Galaxy's* pages of miscellaneous "ads" probably give it the distinction of being the first high-grade magazine to attempt to build up advertising business in other than publishers' announcements.

It remains to say a few words about the physical appearance of the magazine. It was octavo in size, usually of 144 pages.

It was a semi-monthly for one year, and thereafter appeared monthly until January, 1878, after which it was merged with *The Atlantic Monthly*. The first two covers used by *The Galaxy* were bizarre creations; after that appeared the design printed in black on a grey stock which came to be familiar to readers of the magazine. *The Galaxy* was never as well printed as *Lippincott's*, *The Overland*, or *The Atlantic*; but it was by no means distressing in its letter-press. Nor were the *Galaxy* illustrations, as a whole, worthy of much higher praise. At the beginning, each issue had a wood engraving as frontispiece. Most of them, the work of Davis and Speers, were very wooden indeed, having little of grace or truth, and much of styles in dress and beards. In 1868 there was an effort to illustrate more adequately, and W. J. Hennessy, Gaston Fay, Winslow Homer, and Sol Eytinge contributed with great inequality of production. In May of this year *The Galaxy* announced that the engraving had been put into W. J. Linton's hands, but very few Linton engravings ever found their way into the *Galaxy* pages. The last woodcut appeared in March, 1872, and in the latter half of its life the magazine was without illustration.

To sum up *The Galaxy* in a paragraph is not easy. It did not lack its enthusiastic admirers in its own day; witness *The Daily Register* of New Haven, Conn., which said it was "about as near perfection as anything can be." George Cary Eggleston in his autobiography, published in 1910, spoke of "the best and most literary of American magazines, *The Galaxy*." Brander Matthews wrote in *The Unpartizan Review* in 1920: "*The Galaxy* seemed to me then, as indeed it does now, one of the most interesting of American monthlies." But for the later reader of *The Galaxy* there are three notable things that stand out. First, it was fresher and more lively and readable than most of the other periodicals of its day; second, it presents to the intelligent reader a better history of its times than any other monthly of the years from 1865 to 1880, because of its superior variety and directness; and third, it published a considerable amount of important literature.

It will be appropriate to close this article with some sentences from the announcement with which *The Atlantic Monthly* welcomed *Galaxy* subscribers in February, 1878:

. . . *The Galaxy* and the *The Atlantic* more than any other two American magazines have appealed to kindred tastes. . . . Each had its advantages, and these advantages are now united. . . . The freshness, the brightness, the alertness that gave tone to *The Galaxy* will not cease, we hope, in the alliance which makes *The Galaxy* and *The Atlantic* one. . . . Retaining its chief writers, we shall aim to perpetuate the finest characteristics of a magazine which for eleven years has been a presence in our periodical literature so distinctly agreeable and useful that it could not wholly pass away without great public regret.

And so *The Galaxy* was submerged in *The Atlantic*, a phenomenon which suggested to the pun-loving mind of one *Galaxy* contributor the idea for a sonnet, which ended,

The stars go out, extinguished by the sea  
Lost in the great Atlantic's rhythmic sweep.

FRANK LUTHER MOTT.

University of Iowa.



## BOOK REVIEWS

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### WHAT IS BEAUTY?

STUDIES IN RECENT AESTHETIC. By Katherine Gilbert. Chapel Hill, N. C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1927, pp. 178.

The question "What is beauty"? is as old as the like question about truth and as hard to answer. Yet in this era of machine-made and standardized products we need to give increasing attention to the matter of introducing more of beauty into our manner of living. Mrs. Gilbert, then, has done a real service in gathering together into this small volume the outstanding results of the most recent essays in the field of æsthetic investigation.

The major part of the book is devoted to statement, evaluation, and criticism of the theories of Bosanquet, Croce, Santayana and Lalo, a chapter being given to each. There are also a chapter on Bergson's theory of comedy and on current tendencies in æsthetics; this latter would be more easily understood by the uninitiated reader if it came at the end of the volume instead of at the beginning.

Mrs. Gilbert takes issue with Croce on his theory that each work of art is *sui generis* and that the only basis of comparison between such works is quantity. Such a view gives no system of ideas, no proper standard of values. Allowance must also be made for quality. Croce calls art spiritual vision; if so, is one spiritual vision different from another in size, or rather in richness and truth?

While Croce makes art equal to expression of inner vision, Santayana considers expression not the whole but only a part of the æsthetic effect. He recognizes three elements: (1) material beauty, consisting of feelings, colors, sounds, and sensuous imagery; (2) formal beauty, depending upon the arrangement of the sensuous elements; and (3) expression which adds meaning through association with previous experience. But the central fact in San-

tayana's æsthetic is his use of the empirical-historical method for tracing the evolution of beauty as a chance product. For him there is no Platonic Idea of Beauty, no essence behind the particular instance. We consider certain forms beautiful because luck or chance caused us to evolve that way. Mrs. Gilbert rightly objects that such an utterly materialistic view does not give us the hang of things, does not present a system, does not adduce adequate causes why "out of the chance motions and clashing of primordial physical elements should issue massive spiritual capacities and centers of appreciation".

Lalo, a recent French writer, introduces the notion of relativity. He says that æsthetic law arises from the organization of the relations of æsthetic phenomena to other phenomena; and he means to include all relations, mathematical, mechanical, physiological, psychological, sociological—a stupendous task! For working purposes, however, he is willing to consider only one class of relationships, the social; and so he defines æsthetic value as admiration by a public. It follows that beauty may adhere to a work of art in one generation, leave it in the next, and return in the third. This seems too uncertain. No doubt convention and habit do have much weight in determining what things we call beautiful. But surely there must be some inherent reason why certain products are considered beautiful by all ages while others have an ephemeral popularity. Lalo admits that mere number of votes does not make art great; the voters must be qualified to pass judgment. Then the question arises, how determine the qualified voters? And immediately the whole matter of art value goes back of the public to the art object.

The chapter on Bosanquet is concerned with the question whether an artist's medium is or is not a hindrance to his art, the answer found being that "it can neither be totally opposed to nor wholly indifferent to artistic expression". That is, the medium, whether stone, or paint, or sound, sets limits, while at the same times it offers possibilities, to the expression of the artist's vision.

A good bibliography would have improved the book.

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## PHILOSOPHY'S FAIRY TALE

**IDEALISM AS A PHILOSOPHY.** By R. F. Alfred Hoernlé. New York: George H. Doran Co., 1927, pp. 330.

Using the author's own simile, we have here a book which purports to serve the general reader as a kind of chart for finding his way through the tangled and mist-shrouded mazes of the land of idealistic theory. And it must be said that it accomplishes its purpose unusually well. Moreover, it comes most opportunely at a time of widespread revival of interest in philosophy, when those who have read some popular general history of the subject will be seeking, it is to be hoped, other books to lead them into more intensive study of particular schools of thought.

Professor Hoernlé, of course, needs no introduction to the philosophic world. For the benefit of the general public, however, it may be said that he was formerly professor in the department of philosophy at Harvard University and that he is now Professor of Philosophy in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. The present book is his third major contribution to the literature of philosophy. So he speaks with authority.

As the book is intended not for specialists but for the general reader and the beginner in the study of philosophy, it very appropriately opens with a chapter on "How to Study Philosophy", which can be read with profit by anyone, for it contains many helpful suggestions and is particularly wise in emphasizing the importance of actively thinking on philosophical questions as contrasted with the mere passive reception of the thought of another. We learn by doing. A closing section sets forth the necessity for defining the terms to be used in any discourse.

Accordingly, the second chapter makes clear the differences of meaning of the terms "idea", "ideal", and "idealism" in common speech and in philosophy. Especial attention is given to the term "idea" as used on the street, in psychology, and in philosophy by Plato, by the mediævalists, by Locke and other moderns.

After this preliminary preparing of the ground, there follows the main body of the book in four parts, each devoted to one of the main types of idealism: (1) Spiritual Pluralism, represented by Berkeley and James Ward; (2) Spiritual Monism, as seen in

Schopenhauer and Bergson; (3) Critical Idealism of Kant; (4) Absolute Idealism, with Hegel and Bosanquet as types. A final chapter presents a summary and comparison of these various points of view. There is a good bibliography with comments to guide the novice to further reading.

The style is clear, easy, and notably free from technical terms—the professional jargon that makes many philosophical writings distasteful and unintelligible to the general reader. Anyone with a fair command of English can follow it with comfort, interest, and pleasure. The orderly and systematic arrangement of matter is admirable.

While Professor Hoernlé is strictly fair in his presentation, his own personal bias is toward absolute idealism, "the theory that interrupts Reality as the appearances of the Absolute". It is doubtful whether this particular theory will ever prove very popular and comforting because it conceives the Absolute as impersonal and individual persons as evanescent. The theist will find more congenial atmosphere in the spiritual pluralism of James Ward which preserves for us a personal God and the individuality and freedom of finite selves.

R. C. SOMMERVILLE.

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### SCIENCE? POOH! POOH!

SCIENCE: THE FALSE MESSIAH. By C. E. Ayres. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1927, pp. 296.

Many recent sophisticated books emotionally clamor that our civilization is falling into a gloomy abyss or a new dark age. Dr. Ayres, who for several years has been writing for the *New Republic*, and before that taught philosophy at Brown, Chicago, Amherst, and Reed, writes clear, vivid, and most entertaining English.

His book is perhaps the limit of current sophistication and cynicism—condemning science, religion, and philosophy, but chiefly science. It concludes (p. 280) that "To limpid intelligence the world is a mud-bank of deceit on which crawls the human race gorging itself on self-deceit". Worse than that, even our "intellectually superior" are unfit (281), and parasites (279), the "prey

of enervating doubts" (183); and "any intellectual theory now in good standing . . . is the sarcophagus of the spiritual life . . . Its product is a mummy . . . quite dead" (173-4).

Dr. Ayres' book, nevertheless, compels attention from thoughtful men because it calmly and competently recites the fundamental principles and facts "in good standing" in our science, philosophy, and theology; and by the use of orthodox logic, with clear and deadly rigor proves all that intellectual base of our civilization to be false and delusory. So far as he goes on substantial points, he is irrefutable, and certainly gets himself into a dark age. He simply fails to go beyond such erroneous orthodoxy.

But first let us look at the outline of his argument. He proves by facts (116 ff.) that philosophy is an "episode" in the "dead-lock" between orthodox science and religion, and that philosophers have become futile and incompetent. His philosophers have realized "the utter helplessness of either science or religion to take the other's place; and . . . the impossibility of civilization's resting on a combination of the two". So he writes a chapter showing that "Philosophy Embalms a Folk-Lore"—folk-lore being his curse word for dogma, sentimentality, and superstition. Although he presents no consecutive discussion of religion, throughout his book he frequently gives sharp factual evidence that (ecclesiastical) religion is folk-lore, or a mixture of dogma, sentimentality, and superstition or supernaturalism—all "verified by repetition and sanctified by faith". He bluntly concludes that religion is demonstrated "by rhetoric" and has no "meaning and value to humanity". If religion, then, is folk-lore, what about science? The bulk of the book is proof that science "in good standing" is fundamentally the same sort of folk-lore. Dr. Ayres is able to prove that, because it is a fact that all but perhaps less than a dozen accredited scientists do base science upon dogmas or unobserved guesses—nowadays evasively named "postulates". He simply picks out those guesses and exhibits them—usually in all their ridiculous inconsistency: "by trying to make our beliefs scientific we have succeeded only in making them absurd". He sums up such facts by concluding that some or all scientists are venal, are dictatorial, still assume a demonology in thermodynamics, are guilty of equivocation, and are insincere and meretricious, "do not mean what they say", are preachers rather than observ-



ers, "disingenuous to say the least", evasive, and so on. He sees no good in science—only essential or basic falseness.

That three-fold intellectual thesis of the book—that philosophy, religion, and science are folk-lore—is not very new, although it is unusually sound and well supported by facts. It is simply a brilliant affirmation of agnosticism, or "faith" in the modern sense (*i.e.*, *conscious* basic dogma or postulates). Agnosticism ultimately, of course, should doubt even itself—which this book competently does. The appalling, but quite consistent, gist of the book is its *practical* conclusion. Ayres judges, from facts cited, that scientists now deceive and mislead laymen worse than do theologians, philosophers, and profiteers. And he concludes that the public like to be duped and are increasingly going to accept scientists as leaders—even saviors. He further concludes that the "intellectually superior" are helpless in all that, as they cannot find the truth; and he cynically implies that they, therefore, as complacent opportunists, will condone, and even assist in, such exploitation by scientists. Although appalling, that abyss plainly is the consistent end of basic scientific (or any other sort of) dogma, or the consciously unproved postulates or faith which Ayres curses as folk-lore. He at least deserves credit for being one of the extremely few men with the courage calmly to face that practical end of agnosticism without quibble or evasion. If science, including all human doctrines, is what he orthodoxly takes it to be, then that muck-heap of exploiters, futile quitters, and dupes is the end of it all. Ayres is "the Preacher", writing a much improved version of Ecclesiastes: all is bunk.

But in fact, the world is not so hopeless. Ayres falls into an important emotional exaggeration, and makes one considerable intellectual error. Having for years concentrated chiefly upon the tools (pen, ink, and paper) by which he extends in time and space his organ of speech, Ayres has neglected other tools or machines by which man amplifies his eyes, muscles, and other organs. Therefore, Dr. Ayres is rather ignorant and unskilled in those other machines, and unable to deal competently with a world in which most men have modified their personalities by the effectual addition of such tools to their flesh-and-blood organs. That incompetence naturally distresses him. He is emotionally both irritated at himself, and in fear of those amplified men, grown into

giants by using machines. Floyd Dell, the prominent spokesman of the intellectuals, declares that "the intelligentsia" agree in a "hopeless sentimental protest against a machine civilization which" they conceive "as utterly vicious, spiritually degrading and indeed too hideous and uninteresting to be worth picturing". Because he and other intellectuals can skillfully use the tool, speech-on-paper, they approve that tool, even though it greatly changes our civilization. But not having skill with other machines, they emotionally object to them, bemoaning the changes they similarly make in civilization. And Dr. Ayres shows, page after page, that science unquestionably helps to invent those machines. So he leads the intellectuals in condemning science on this emotional ground. Science, to survive, must study and mitigate that emotional objection. Science scoffs at it—plainly a quick way to commit suicide.

His intellectual error is his failure to see that no particular thing, or part, of the universe can really be isolated from its environment (the rest of the universe). Along with scientific leaders "in good standing," (1) he accepts and uses an already antiquated "science"—failing to note that forty years ago the Michelson-Morley experiment proved that no thing is absolutely isolatable; and that about thirty years ago the same thing was observed more plainly, in the form that a mass or thing changes with its velocity relative to its environment. Also, he (2) uses orthodox Aristotelean or postulational (*i.e.*, dogmatic) mathematical logic (or way of talking), in which one thing is considered absolute, or "individual," or isolated—thus introducing dogma just as fast as he condemns it; and also flatly contradicting observed facts. And as the last aspect of the same error, Dr. Ayres (3) fails to see that all the great religious prophets and poets observed the human side of the basic fact science now sees, that *men* can not be separated from the environment—that we, who are many, are one body in the universe of God, and severally members one of another—and incidentally, of enviroining "machines".

Einstein tried to restate the old science in agreement with that basic fact of continuity—of *real* "consistency," or love and morality in a sound religious sense. But he bogged down in many places in the same old mathematical logic that Ayres can not get out of, in spite of the fact that several books have already been published which substantially get science stated consistently and

non-dogmatically: for instance, *Logic of Modern Physics*, which has just been published by the Harvard physicist Bridgman. Dr. Ayres is of course correct in criticizing all who use the old dogmatic logic (which he uses), and the antiquated factually erroneous science. He is especially right in impeaching our orthodox leaders in science, who learned wrong basic science in youth, and could not unlearn it if they tried. Even Einstein, superbly strong enough to try to unlearn it, got muddled to the point of weird nonsense in attempting to make the new observed fact agree with the old logic which denied that basic fact.

But probably Dr. Ayres is wrong in thinking the situation hopeless. In a generation or two, our false leaders of science will be dead; and the younger scientists, in those improved conditions, may have succeeded in getting out of the muddle of agnostic errors. And the average man has always looked with grave suspicion upon "logic"—upon the old basic dogmatizing. So in the future, as in the past, sooner or later he will ignore any leaders who try to exploit him—even scientists, if they act as Dr. Ayres predicts. In the meantime, Ayres' book is highly valuable to laymen in showing them what to expect if science fails to stop its nonsense. And the book is even more valuable to such scientists as have the moral strength to read its painful indictment of their errors. Most scientific leaders will not be courageous enough to look at the abyss Ayres coldly and cynically points out; so they will all the sooner blindly fall into it—for which we should be grateful to Dr. Ayres.

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### ANGELS IN PICCADILLY

A PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY OF MYSTICISM. By Charles A. Bennett. New Haven, New York: Yale University Press, pp. 190.

Few subjects of like importance have suffered so much from misunderstanding, amounting at times to positive dislike, as has mysticism. In this essay by Professor Bennett we have not only a philosophy of mysticism but a sympathetic and understanding study.

Strictly speaking, the American people are not a religious people, though there can be no doubt as to their idealism; nor can there be any doubt that they are not a materialistic people. Their chief concern, however, is with man and human affairs; our civilization is man-centered not God-centered. Even our idealism is secular. But religion's first and last concern is with God, with the Eternal and the eternal world. And mysticism, as Dean Inge has said, is religion *par excellence*. If religion were our primary concern mysticism would not be a subject for suspicion and misunderstanding, as it certainly is. We need be careful, however, as Pratt warns us in his *Religious Consciousness* lest we make mysticism the only form of religion; for religion has its philosophical or intellectual, its humanitarian or moral, its institutional or organized expressions as well. Any of these divorced from the others suffers. Without philosophy mystics cannot distinguish rightly between true and false experience; without mysticism philosophy becomes cold and arid: without practical expression in human service and warm human relationships mysticism is lured into a spurious other-worldliness; without mysticism morality loses the source of its enthusiasm and tires; without the church or institutional expression of religion mysticism dissipates itself and wanders like a lonely cloud; whereas without mysticism religion fossilizes into ecclesiasticism and its power wanes. Neither may say to the other, I have no need of thee, without the direst folly. This makes mysticism only the more necessary and its misunderstanding the more deplorable. There is mysticism and mysticism, as in other important matters, so that the difference between the pathological and the authentic mystic, as Professor Bennett shows, is that the former is the victim, the latter the master of his troubles. The true mystic is master of himself and of his world in a way that others are not; he has a grasp of reality; he is at home in the universe. He sees things from the inside, as they (really) are.

In the opening words of her delightful little book on *Mysticism in English Literature* Caroline Spurgeon says,

"Mysticism is a term so irresponsibly applied in English that it has become the first duty of those who use it to explain what they mean by it."

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1911), after defining a mystic as "one who believes in spiritual apprehension of truths beyond the understanding", adds, "whence mysticism (n.) (often contempt)". Miss Spurgeon then goes on to say how such terms as "transcendental feeling", "imagination", "mystical reason", cosmic consciousness", "divine sagacity", ecstasy", or "vision" have all been employed to describe this faculty.

Professor Bennett himself avoids formal definitions and as the essay proceeds lets mysticism speak for itself.

Despite the present-day curiosity in mysticism, he holds that the present is not congenial to mysticism: "Our love of action, our naturalism, and secularism, are the chief elements which today make up an atmosphere in which the mystic cannot breathe".

The mystic reverses the ordinary evaluation of goods. "For action," says Professor Bennett, "he substitutes contemplation; for society, solitude; for reason, ecstasy". But this is not peculiar to the mystic; "it is true of the scholar and the artist". The mystic is not a "go-getter", it is true, and he is indifferent to the charge; but his negation of the will is the negation "only of self-will". The passivity is actively sought and involves moral discipline until the stage of ecstasy is reached when one becomes passively active. While Professor Bennett does not go into a description of the ecstasy he denies that there is any complete suspension of consciousness.

If the mystic is baffling to the outsider it is because his method is intuitive, a "synoptic" apprehension of the whole and so not readily translatable into conceptual terms and yet articulated. Here again it is similar to the artist's experience. Intuition is intuition and one cannot rightly fault it for not being something else; though one may object to its being itself as one might object to art. On the other hand, although the mystic may not be always at ease in Sion, he is at home there, so much so that to the non-mystic God seems almost too familiar, like an ordinary acquaintance. Mr. Bennett himself confesses that he does not like the idea of a God who "unbends", a "republican deity" who is ready to shake hands with all comers; a private God at home to the public. Yet the Olympian idea of a God who is not interested in *me* fails me and all me's and he cannot complain if I fail him. God must condescend as well as transcend. He is God and yet *my* God,



To the author of *A Philosophical Study of Mysticism*, however, there is no real quarrel between philosophy and mysticism; indeed, as his title indicates, he holds, though some would have it the other way round, that mysticism is the handmaid of philosophy. Nor does mysticism set itself against morality; it supplements it. It is the goal, "the already accomplished victory" (Bradley) from which morality, at times with bulging eyes is seeking, but vainly. Without religion in this sense morality ends, logically and often in practice, in pessimism and despair. A good fourth of the book is devoted to a discussion of the relation between morality and religion, including the problem of evil; a most suggestive treatment.

The essay closes with a chapter on "The Future of Mysticism", which is really on Art as an antidote for Morality, and Mysticism as an antidote for Art, since Art "may easily become an Island of Circe to which men go, but from which they do not return"; for "while mysticism can provide for its own correction, the love of beauty cannot . . . Further, since we do not know clearly what we are about when we seek beauty we have no means of knowing when we are misusing or exploiting it". The mystic's self-criticism and self-imposed discipline saves him from illusion. "If mysticism is not magic neither is it industry. It is not a manipulation of Deity for the sake of producing effects clearly defined in advance. Much of the mystic preparation is like prayer in its uncommercial and ideal forms, the prayer not for some specific benefit but for some total good".

If there is danger in mysticism it is *corruptio optimi*. But all that shares the Best shares alike a common danger. Although the mystic does not take his orders from philosophy or from organized religion, but from his own authentic experience, at the same time he is no lawless individual and his experience is corporate and ageless. Was not St. Francis a good churchman? "Religion is what a man does with his colitariness", to quote Whitehead; it is a flight of the "alone to the Alone"—the matchless adventure in the light of which all other experience, not pales, but glows with worth and meaning.

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## WHEN MONKHOOD WAS IN FLOWER

I. PHILOSOPHY AND CIVILIZATION IN THE MIDDLE AGES. By Maurice De Wulf. Princeton University Press, 1922, pp. X, 312.

II. MEDIEVAL CITIES, THEIR ORIGINS AND THE REVIVAL OF TRADE. By Henri Pirenne. Translated from the French by Frank D. Halsey. Princeton University Press, 1925, pp. 249.

These two books, taken together, interpret to us the thought and life of the Middle Ages on the intellectual, social, political, and economic aspects.

Strictly speaking, the Renaissance of European civilization began in the eleventh century, while the thirteenth century has been rightly called the "Great Century". Professor De Wulf, whose lectures at Princeton on the Louis Clark Vanusem Foundation form the first of the two volumes under consideration, might well be called the spokesman of the Middle Ages, so many and so varied are his writings on the subject. In addition to his monumental work, *History of Mediaeval Philosophy*, which has just appeared in a new English translation of the fifth French edition, he has written, *Scholasticism, Old and New*; *Studies on Henry of Ghent*; *Outline History of Philosophy*, etc., etc., including a large number of contributions to Philosophical and Historical Magazines, four or five of which appear in chapters in these lectures, which he says, "may be regarded as a supplement to his *History of Mediaeval Philosophy*". This is an approach to "the Middle Ages from a new point of view by showing how the thought of the period is intimately connected with the whole round of Western civilization to which it belongs". The erroneous view of the Middle Ages is clearly explained at the outset. "Disdain for the past begot ignorance, ignorance begot injustice, injustice begot prejudice". Many of his opinions are most startling and quite contradictory to the general views previously held.

He rightly regards the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as the very heart of the Middle Ages to which he proposes to limit his study. He denies that Philosophy is the handmaid of Theology, or "in the service and under the sway of Catholic theology" (p. 149), by asserting that Philosophy was a science distinct from theology. He admits that a statute of the University of Paris in 1272 prohibits deciding against the Faith "but does not instruct

them to decide for the Faith". "Of course one may say of scholastic philosophy that it is largely inspired by religion . . ." "It (medieval philosophy) evolved in a social atmosphere in which religion was dominant" (p. 170). "The religious inspiration is a relational characteristic along with many others; but precisely because this characteristic belongs to the civilization, it belongs to all its factors and is not peculiar to philosophy, which is only one factor". Does this disprove that the scholastic philosophy "is in the service and under sway and direction of Catholic theology," as admittedly everything else was?

Again it is most interesting to note that "there was really great freedom of thought and of speech in the thirteenth century", though he conscientiously admits—"notwithstanding what is now commonly believed on the subject". Does he forget Berengar twice condemned for his views on the Eucharist, Roscellinus, Abelard, Arnold of Brescia, and the Dominican inquisition of the thirteenth century? We need not mention Peter of Bruys, Henry of Lausanne, Peter Waldus and the Albigensians, many of whom were not merely condemned but burned at the stake to establish "this freedom of thought for which the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were so famous". Again, speaking of Abelard, probably the most original and therefore the greatest genius of the Middle Ages, our author says nothing of his two condemnations; one through the influence of St. Bernard at Sens in 1141, and the other by Innocent II. But he does admit "we can now say definitely that to Abelard belongs the great credit of having solved the problem of the universal in the form that was followed throughout the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries". This is the more interesting as he goes on to assert that the fundamental conclusion was "*that the only existing reality in individual reality*". "*The individual alone exists* (italics all his). This is a new interpretation of Thomas Aquinas, and, as applied to the State reads more like the doctrine of Marsiglio of Padua than of Thomas of Aquino. He does not attempt to apply it to the Church. The contradiction would be too apparent. Indeed, his allusions to the Church which we always considered the basis and bulwark of the "Philosophy and Civilization of the Middle Ages," are conspicuous by their brevity and rarity. The word Church finds no place in his index.

He has much to say of the great thirteenth century which was truly great, but when he speaks of the peace of the thirteenth century, where "a grateful repose hovers over all," we wonder if he remembers Frederick II, Conrad and Conradin and the fall of the Hohenstaufen; or the Albigensian Crusade in Toulouse, or the Latin Empire in Constantinople, or the Sicilian Vespers, or the Crusades, and feudal warfare. Therefore we are not surprised when he goes on to speak of Paris as the cosmopolis of philosophy whose existence as a common centre of learning, contributed in a large measure to safeguard for a century and a half the *unity* of doctrine. We wonder if he includes Anselm the Realist, Abelard the Conceptualist, Thomas Aquinas the moderate Realist, Duns Scotus the Franciscan, and William of Occam the Nominalist and individualist in this wonderful "unity of a century and a half".

His characterization of the thirteenth century as marking the climax of the growth of philosophical thought, might be extended by noting the climax of the Papacy and the Mediaeval Church, of the Hohenstaufen and the Mediaeval Empire, of the Mendicants and the Monastic system, no less than of the Crusades and feudalism. After this century all those great movements and institutions began to decline in order to give place to the larger institutions and wider movements made possible by the Revolution of the Sixteenth Century.

M. Pirenne's volume contains the substance of lectures delivered in various American Universities during the latter part of 1922. "It is an attempt" (a most interesting, valuable and successful one) "to expound, in a general way, the economic awakening and birth of urban civilization in Western Europe during the Middle Ages". A useful bibliography completes the volume, which unfortunately lacks an index.

The book opens with a description of the Mediterranean as the centre and bulwark of the political and economic activity of the Roman Empire to the end of the third century. Of the two great divisions of the Empire, the East far surpassed the West in superiority of civilization and in a much higher level of economic development. At the beginning of the fourth century there were no longer any really great cities save in the East. Syria became the great commercial centre. Then came the flood of Germanic tribes

in the fourth century and at the beginning of the fifth all was over. The whole West was invaded and Roman provinces were transformed into Germanic Kingdoms. "But it would be a decided mistake to imagine that the arrival of the Germanic tribes had as a result the substitution of a purely agricultural economy and a general stagnation in trade for urban life and commercial activity".

The invasions in the ninth and tenth centuries by the Norsemen and Saracens, to which should be added, invasions of Hungarians and Slavs from the East, the disintegration of the Carolingian Empire, the weakness and corruption of the Papacy, and the spread of feudalism in the place of a strong central government, brought about the complete downfall of the commerce and civilization of the West, leaving only an agricultural stage. Politically and economically as well as intellectually the tenth is the dark century. Cities in the sense of a middle class population and a communal organization disappeared, and a feudal condition, we can hardly call it a system, dominated Europe, and even affected the organization of the Church. The revival of commerce marked a new beginning in the latter part of the tenth century—the author is quite confused in his indication of centuries and the book abounds in mistaking ninth for tenth and tenth for eleventh and even vice versa. This revival and its further spread, came from Venice and from the Flemish coast, which first came into contact with foreign trade, just at the time when the trade of the West had disappeared with the shutting off of its foreign markets. The national routes of the Danube to the East, the Rhine to the north, and the Rhone to the West enabled the Italian merchants, especially the Lombards (from which Lombard Street in London takes its name), to become the great traders and bankers of Europe. Cities sprang up in their path. Flanders became a great centre for the commerce of the north and the Flemish merchants were leaders in commerce and in the woolen trade.

In the twelfth century, gradually but definitely, Western Europe was transformed. Just as the Italian cities had driven back the Moslems from the Mediterranean, so in the course of the twelfth century the German cities drove back the Scandinavians from the North Sea and the Baltic, on which hereafter were spread the sails of the Hanse towns. This movement was further developed and consolidated by the rise of the Merchant Class and the for-



mation of the Gilds. The origin of the Merchant Class, the author accurately and historically shows, was not from the agricultural masses, nor from the commissaries of the great abbeys, nor from the fairs and market places as some historians have thought; but was due to the rise of the commercial profession in Venice, at a very early period. It is most significant that when instruction was the monopoly of the clergy generally throughout Europe, the ability to write was widespread in Venice. There was a close connection between this curious phenomenon and the development of trade due largely to the rise and extension of the credit system.

We come now to the "Rise of the Middle Class". In no civilization is city life evolved independently of commerce and industry. A city group, as a matter of fact, can live only by importing its food supply from outside, with which must correspond an exportation of manufactured products. Commerce and industry made the cities of the Middle Ages. At no era in history is there so marked a contrast as that which their social and economic organization presented to the social and economic organization of the country.

The development of Municipal Institutions forms another interesting and valuable chapter for the constitutional historian. These began by concessions limited to their own needs dating from the eleventh century, beginning in Northern Italy and in the region of Flanders and Northern France. In this movement they were supported by the Monarch in their opposition to feudalism. This brought them into political activities which tended to the weakening of the contractual principle of the Feudal State, to the advantage of the principle of the authority of the Monarchial State.

The cities not only gained an economic ascendancy but contributed also towards making them take part in political life. Furthermore, in the fourteenth century, a literature and an art was brought forth from the bosom of the middle class, animated with their spirit. Until then knowledge and literature in form and matter were exclusively in Latin and the monopoly of the clergy, now they had begun to spread to the middle class. As early as the twelfth century the municipal councils were busy founding schools for the burghers, the first lay schools since the end of antiquity. Thus the burgher was initiated into reading and writing long before the noble, because what was only an intellectual luxury for

the noble was for the burgher a daily need. Yet the teaching in these communal schools was, until the eve of the Reformation, limited to elementary instruction. The burghers of the Middle Ages were thus singularly well prepared for the role which they were to play in the two great future movements of ideas: the Renaissance, the child of the lay mind, and the Reformation, towards which religious mysticism was leading.

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### MORTGAGING EUROPE

A HISTORY OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. By John Holladay Latané. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1927, pp. 725.

It would not involve any very serious departure from the truth to say that this volume represents the expansion of the author's *From Isolation to Leadership* from less than 300 pages to more than 700. The earlier treatise was a sweeping and brilliant survey. The new contribution is a detailed and well-documented history. For the loss in readability, the scholarly documentation will not compensate except for the specialist and the reader in the reference room.

For the student who may use this volume either as a text-book or a book for collateral reading, the classification and arrangement of the material are very admirable. There are, to begin with, some useful "Notes on Sources". The contents are divided into six parts each containing from four to six chapters. The treatment follows in general the chronological order. The titles of the six parts suggest the fields stressed: Republican Principles and Ideals, The Defiance of the Old World, Rounding Out Borders and Looking Over Seas, Safeguarding the Union, Expansion in Caribbean and Pacific, Intervention in Europe. A good topical synopsis is given in the page margins.

In the first five parts the author presents freshly and satisfactorily facts and data which for the most part have already been covered in other volumes. The most original work has been done in part six in which appears a comprehensive and judicious analysis of the American foreign policy during and since the World War.

The author's point of view, already revealed in his other books, appears again clearly in the chapters of Part VI. On page 703, the present policy of the American government of "coöperation without entangling alliances" is characterized as "an empty formula, a species of camouflage". And on the same page, "The isolation of today is different from the isolation of the fathers. The isolation of Washington and Jefferson was an isolation of weakness, while our present isolation is an isolation of power. It is selfish and imperialistic. We demand all that is due us and refuse to assume any obligations or give anything in return. As a weak nation we were the great advocates of international arbitration. Now that we have become a great power the attitude of the Senate toward arbitration is, as John Bassett Moore says, less favorable than it was 125 years ago".

These deductions, discomfoting as they are to the loyal American, seem to follow with unescapable logic from the facts of our diplomatic history. On the terminology used perhaps some difference of opinion might legitimately arise. Over the substance, none.

The permanent attractiveness of the volume is marred by the apparently vindictive comments on Senator Borah made in the text on page 65, concerning the gifts made by the King of France to the United States during the Revolution. The detailed and exhaustive facts presented by the author are convincing, and probably conclusive. The wisdom of elevating the importance of the irritating Borah episode to a place in the text is questionable. At the most, a reference in the footnotes would have sufficed.

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### THE CYCLOPS OF CHELSEA

CARLYLE AT HIS ZENITH (1848-53). By David Alec Wilson; New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1927. \$5.00.

Lovers of biography (whose names to-day are legion) and all good Carlyleans will cordially welcome a new volume in the monumental *Life* of the great Victorian, "the melancholy Polyphemus of Chelsea." Mr. Wilson's zest, industry, skill, and patience have

been unflagging. He has read in and around his subject exhaustively. Although he never saw Carlyle himself, he has interviewed any number of people who did know him, some of them intimately, including members of the Carlyle family. He gives evidence everywhere that he has spared no effort to present Carlyle authentically, as he lived and moved among his contemporaries, not as he existed in the obsessed imagination of Froude, the "official" biographer.

In fact, as Mr. Wilson proceeds, the difference in his portrait from that of Froude's becomes clearer. The difference is decidedly more marked in the period of life covered by this fourth volume than it is in the preceding volumes. The period covered is from 1848 to 1853. Froude was introduced to Carlyle in 1849, from which date his long personal contact began. Carlyle was then at his zenith, as Mr. Wilson tells us on his title page. Much of his best work, the work that will longest endure, was done. He was sought out as one of the best talkers in London. The early up-hill struggles were over. He stood at the summit of his years, one of the most striking, most picturesque figures ever seen in the republic of letters. Without question Carlyle enjoyed his great reputation and influence. But it was a period of uncertainty, both for the times and for Carlyle himself. The revolutions of 1848 had shaken Europe as with an earthquake. Democracy was striding forward, a threatening and incalculable portent. Industrial conditions were going from bad to worse. Ireland was a synonym alike for indescribable poverty and hopeless political mismanagement. Added to these conditions without, which profoundly affected Carlyle, was a restless state of mind due to the fact that he had not yet decided what his next absorbing literary effort was to be.

Froude's account of Carlyle during these years is (as Professor David Mason long ago pointed out) too exclusively drawn from his "soliloquising and journalising" over these distresses, without and within. Readers will recall the Rembrandtesque character of the portrait. "Gloom clung to him like a shadow," says Froude. And the copious extracts that he quotes from journal, letter, and conversation do indeed make a mountain of evidence, huge, dark, and volcanic. If this was the man he saw, it is little wonder that his own added colors only intensified the darkness of the picture;

as, for example, his comment on Carlyle's German journey in search of background for his history of Frederick the Great: it was, says Froude, "terrible in prospect, terrible in the execution, terrible in the retrospect". Nor should, nor indeed *can*, the reader forget Froude's other obsession, that Carlyle had more or less lost his head over Lady Ashburton. As his fantastic description has it—"She became Gloriana, Queen of Fairyland, and he, with a true vein of chivalry in him, became her rustic Red Cross Knight, who, if he could, would have gladly led her own *Una* into the same enchanting service".

All this is of course an old story. But it is refreshing to be assured, as Mr. Wilson abundantly does assure us, that there is another picture, less dramatic, less artistic, perhaps, but at least authentic and trustworthy. Mr. Wilson is scarcely an artist, and his critical opinions are not always to be trusted. One might say that his book is less an interpretation than a running series of anecdotes, pieced together with great skill and presenting in their totality a far more complete *personal* Carlyle than is to be found elsewhere.

The stormy prophet, emitting thunder and lightning from lips and pen, is not left out; it is, we remember, the time of *Latter-Day Pamphlets*. It is fair to say that in this period of his "zenith" Carlyle,—fully conscious of his fame and his matured powers,—gave vent to explosive objurgations on men and events in greater volume than in earlier or later times. Certainly Mr. Wilson's pages leave us in no doubt as to the black and fiery temper of this modern Cyclops: his contempt of art and artists, his horror of noises, his sleeplessness, his hopelessness at times, his depressed sense of approaching age, his hesitations over "Frederick", and all the rest with which the reading world is familiar.

But (as his wife said) "Carlyle is not one but many men". Otherwise we should not find him, as we do, one of the most fascinating personalities of all time. Mr. Wilson knows that the authentic portrait of Carlyle must have its lights as well as its shadows. Accordingly he has worked in a mass of material wholly unused by Froude, and partly unavailable: the friendly opinions and sketches of Gavan Duffy, Espinasse, Neuberg, Masson, Leigh Hunt, Conway, and others of less note. The total result is a man, we must believe, "in the habit as he lived", true to life. The



transcendent intellectual and moral virtues of Carlyle begin to stand out in their grandeur,—his rare sanity of mind and heart, his penetrating vision, his superb independence and dignity of soul, his industry, his sincere disregard of wealth, station, luxury, and other external matters that mean so much to most people. Many lovers of Carlyle have always believed him to have been one of the "grandly simple" sages of the western world. Mr. Wilson confirms their faith.

It is devoutly to be hoped that he will be able to finish an enterprise so successfully carried forward in the volume before us. There are two more to come. "These remaining two volumes shall appear in due course, if I am spared," says Mr. Wilson, "as soon as the work of condensation can be completed. That is all I can promise; but a prophecy may be ventured, that the work may be finished before the end of 1929."

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### MAPPING COCKAIGNE

AN ATLAS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE. By Clement T. Goode, Ph.D., and Edgar F. Shannon, Ph.D. New York and London: The Century Co.

A literary atlas, or atlas of English Literature, has come, and lies open upon my table. In it I look in vain for Casterbridge, Stoniton, and Barchester; but the places where famous men and women were born, lived and wrote, died and were buried, are marked century by century. There is a map of Saxon England—without Avalon; there are maps of the England of the Middle Ages and of every age to our own; of Scotland, of Ireland, and of Italy, showing the places visited by well-known writers; but there is no sign of Loamshire, of Barset, of Ravenshoe, of the forest of Arden, or of the Hill Difficulty. One must know before he consults this volume, that Knutsford is Cranford, and that Ipswich is Eatanswill; that the famous journey of Pilgrim was in the countryside about Bedford—for there is nothing here that tells him. Essex is plainly marked, but there is no trace of Wessex.

If we expect that a literary atlas should show us these things, we are disappointed when one fails to do so; but have we a right to expect it? When Shakespeare lays the scene of a play in Verona, in Vienna, or in Venice, do his characters move in the small dots we know so well on the maps of Italy or Austria? From time to time critics are disturbed at the ignorance displayed by the genius who could place a scene on the sea-coast of Bohemia—forgetting that other genius who invited Switzerland to send a couple of warships to take part in the naval review held in connection with the opening of the Panama Canal. The Bohemia of *The Winter's Tale* was not the Bohemia of the maps; it *had* a sea-coast, geographies to the contrary notwithstanding. The Forest of Arden was not the Ardennes, and perhaps not even the Warwickshire forest of former times—for no Duke (or Earl) of Warwick lived there in banishment, and the play has a French—foreign—flavor, at times. The scene of this story, too, is in Bohemia. . . .

Such a literary atlas as one might hope for, would really be a map of Bohemia. And the Bohemia in question is neither Czechoslovakia nor the Rive Gauche, nor Greenwich Village: but one frontier would touch the Land of Cockaigne, and another the Fairy Isles of the West, beyond the County Galway where Morgan le Fay dwells with Arthur. We cannot, perhaps, expect a Doctor of Philosophy to chart such a country, for it is the abode of Romance, and knows not latitude and longitude. Tourists visit the ruins of Tintagel, and the Castle is marked on our maps; we can still see the Round Table at Winchester, but where is Camelot? I am told that the stream of visitors to Hamlet's tomb at Elsinore has proved so lucrative, that the authorities are thinking of putting Ophelia's grave beside it; Rizzio's blood is still visible at Holyrood, and Myles Standish's cottage at Duxbury has to be resingled every few years, to repair the ravages of the souvenir hunters. . . .

But this is history.

London and Paris, New York and Boston, are full of literary memories—ay, and smaller places, too. But where are Zenith, Eureka, and Gopher Prairie? Peggotty goes to Yarmouth, and

Miss Betsey Trotwood to Canterbury (one in a long line of pilgrims), but who can locate Dingley Dell? Better, perhaps, that there are places not found on any map, so that the reader may, like another Jim Hawkins, leave the streets of Bristol for an unchartered Treasure Island, or, like a modern Lemuel Gulliver, set sail for Lilliput, unhampered by the bonds of history and geography, and secure from such anger as that of the inhabitant of Tarascon when the innocent traveller asks him the way to Tartarin.

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### THE MOVING FINGER WRITES

SOUTHERN LITERARY STUDIES. By C. Alphonso Smith. Chapel, Hill, N. C. The University of North Carolina Press, pp. 181.

This posthumous collection of essays by the late Professor of English at Annapolis preserves some of the most trenchant writings of one of the most fertile and sane American students of literature. Obviously, much of what Dr. Smith said is dateable to-day; many of his opinions smack strongly of the region in which his mind was formed, and his preferences are largely those of his profession. Yet so beautifully has he said what he had to say that he will long be remembered as a stylist of no mean importance. Independence and courage are not entirely absent, as, for instance, in "Southern Oratory Before the War" and "Literature in the South". The sketch of Dr. Smith's life included in the volume is written in good taste, and pointedly suggests his significance in the literary history of the South.

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MORE CONTEMPORARY AMERICANS. By Percy H. Boynton. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 231.

With the untimely passing of Stuart P. Sherman from the arena of American criticism, Professor Boynton of Chicago seems to be the most likely contender for his place in the ranks of those who are re-valuating the literary "reliques" of past decades in America. "I concur," he suavely says, "with Mr. Sherman that

the critic should have arrived at a philosophy of life, that he should know what he believes in, be able to explain why, and want to be convincing in his explanation". In the present collection of reprinted essays (which perversely include Herman Melville, Lafcadio Hearn, and Ambrose Bierce among "contemporary" Americans) Dr. Boynton exquisitely fulfills his own definition of the critic. Yet, in "The College Insurgents" and "Democracy and Public Taste" he is hardly distinguishable from his deceased colleague: the point of view there represented reveals the least informed and least provocative phase of Stuart P. Sherman's activity. Considered together, Dr. Boynton's essays disappoint one because of their thoroughly conventional and trite ideas. Decidedly he misses the main currents of literary movement in contemporary America; and is satisfied with reiterating what has already been adequately said by one whom he is apparently slavishly imitating.

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THE WRITINGS AND LIFE OF GEORGE MEREDITH. A Centenary Study. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 250.

This is, perhaps, the most adequate available discussion of Meredith's life and writings. Largely descriptive, and very clear in its exposition of the circumstances in which Meredith wrote, it serves as an excellent introduction to the work of a novelist whose radical changes in the form and content of the British novel await the study and critical discernment of some one competent to do it with distinction.

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THE PHYSIOLOGY OF TASTE: OR MEDITATIONS ON TRANSCENDENTAL GASTRONOMY. By Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin. New York: Boni and Liveright, pp. 360.

Competent eaters like Dickens, and competent drinkers like Meredith would have found this significant treatise on the joys of eating and drinking greatly to their taste. Alackaday, how great is our need for a renascence of good food, properly prepared; of some choiceness in selection, of some high dreaming of new and strange dishes! Someday, I comfort myself, I shall taste a nightingale's tongue dipped in honey and be delivered from this abominable fried chicken, to which I have been exposed, with considera-

ble danger to my stomach, ever since I came to Sewanee. How can Southerners who are experts in the fine art of living be so satisfied with the detestable routine of their negro cooks? Why should not eating and drinking be attended with elevated meditations concerning the subtle bouquets and aromas and flavors which the virtuosi in eating have discovered? A reading of Brillat-Savarin will improve the enjoyment in eating even a common and vulgar beefsteak. Let's all be gourmands!

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**MINOR PROPHECIES.** By Lee Simonson. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, pp. 167.

Sufficiently irritating to provoke conventional minds, this little collection of nine essays ought to provide considerable amusement for those whose preferences in art are not limited to what is being done to-day. Mr. Simonson's credo is challenging: "Beauty is essentially a by-product, the record of that appropriateness (to the time of its creation), of relevance outlived". The book gives one a very vivid impression of sophisticated gossip in a studio on Park Avenue, the artist lighting his cigarette and talking airily about his likes and dislikes, flattering his readers of the hinterland of Manhattan Island with their knowledge of what is going on in the salons and studios of his beloved Island. It is highly recommended for use with copies of *Perfect Behavior*: the latter provides the technique, *Minor Prophecies* the substance of what the well-informed will talk about this spring.

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**EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON.** By Mark Van Doren. New York: The Literary Guild of America. 1927. Pp. 93.

This little book on the American poet, now widely recognized as one most worthy of attention and study, is a convenient assembling of available facts and critical judgments. In spite of its deficiency in independent judgment, Dr. Van Doren's book will excellently serve as an introduction to the poet and his work for those who are yet to make their acquaintance.